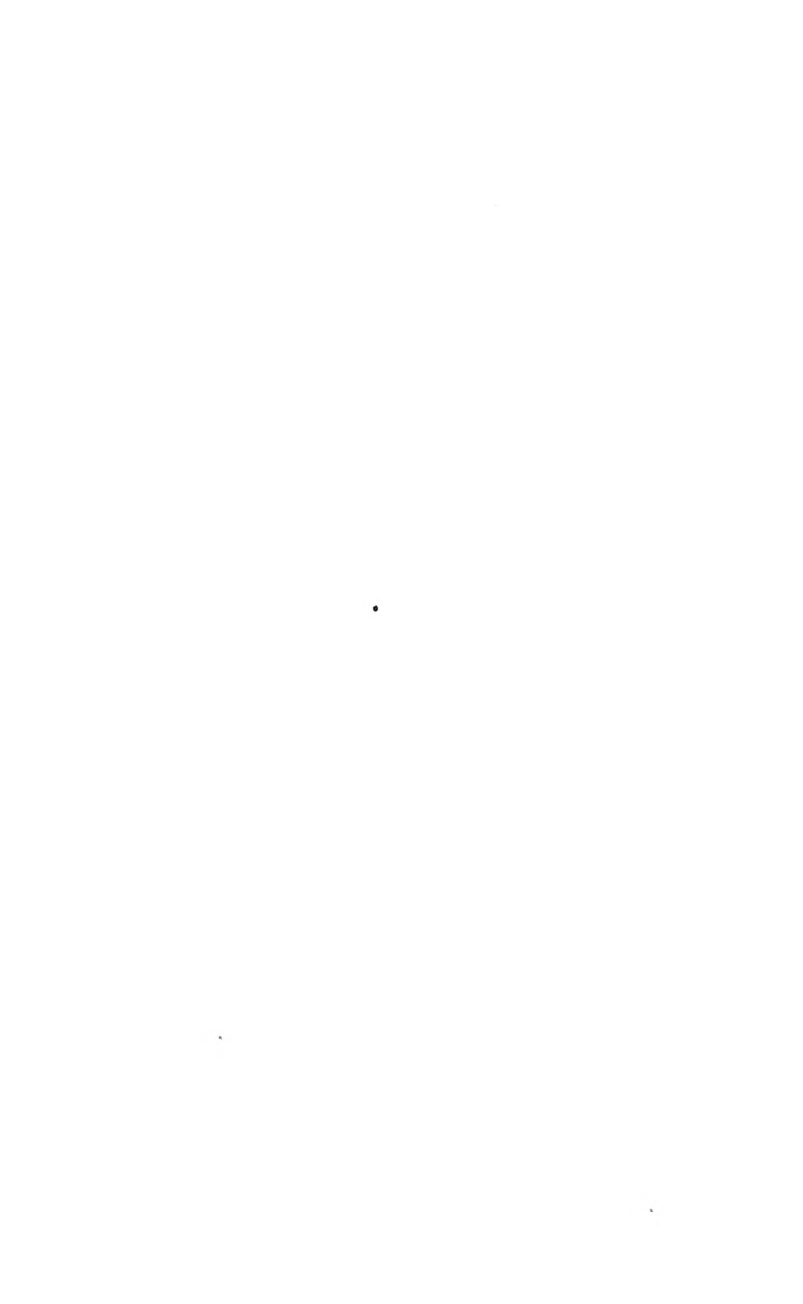


A HAZARD OF NEW FORTUNES.

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A HAZARD OF NEW FORTUNES

A Novel

BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES

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A HAZARD OF NEW FORTUNES.



PART THIRD.

VI.

MRS. HORN believed in the world and in society and its unwritten constitution devoutly, and she tolerated her niece's benevolent activities as she tolerated her æsthetic sympathies because these things, however oddly, were tolerated—even encouraged by society; and they gave Margaret a charm. They made her originality interesting. Mrs. Horn did not intend that they should ever go so far as to make her troublesome; and it was with a sense of this abeyant authority of her aunt's that the girl asked her approval of her proposed call upon the Dryfooses. She explained as well as she could the social destitution of these opulent people, and she had of course to name Beaton as the source of her knowledge concerning them.

“Did Mr. Beaton suggest your calling on them?”

“No; he rather discouraged it.”

“And why do you think you ought to go in this

particular instance? New York is full of people who don't know anybody."

Margaret laughed. "I suppose it's like any other charity: you reach the cases you know of. The others you say you can't help, and you try to ignore them."

"It's very romantic," said Mrs. Horn. "I hope you've counted the cost; all the possible consequences."

Margaret knew that her aunt had in mind their common experience with the Leightons, whom, to give their common conscience peace, she had called upon with her aunt's cards and excuses, and an invitation for her Thursdays, somewhat too late to make the visit seem a welcome to New York. She was so coldly received, not so much for herself as in her quality of envoy, that her aunt experienced all the comfort which vicarious penance brings. She did not perhaps consider sufficiently her niece's guiltlessness in the expiation. Margaret was not with her at St. Barnaby in the fatal fortnight she passed there, and never saw the Leightons till she went to call upon them. She never complained: the strain of asceticism, which mysteriously exists in us all, and makes us put peas, boiled or unboiled, in our shoes, gave her patience with the snub which the Leightons presented her for her aunt. But now she said with this in mind, "Nothing seems simpler than to get rid of people if you don't want them. You merely have to let them alone."

"It isn't so pleasant, letting them alone," said Mrs. Horn.

"Or having them let you alone," said Margaret; for neither Mrs. Leighton nor Alma had ever come to enjoy the belated hospitality of Mrs. Horn's Thursdays.

"Yes, or having them let you alone," Mrs. Horn courageously consented. "And all that I ask you, Margaret, is to be sure that you really want to know these people."

"I don't," said the girl seriously, "in the usual way."

"Then the question is whether you do in the unusual way. They will build a great deal upon you," said Mrs. Horn, realising how much the Leightons must have built upon her, and how much out of proportion to her desert they must now dislike her; for she seemed to have had them on her mind from the time they came, and had always meant to recognise any reasonable claim they had upon her.

"It seems very odd, very sad," Margaret returned, "that you never can act unselfishly in society affairs. If I wished to go and see those girls just to do them a pleasure, and perhaps because if they're strange and lonely, I might do them good, even—it would be impossible."

"Quite," said her aunt. "Such a thing would be Quixotic. Society doesn't rest upon any such basis. It can't; it would go to pieces, if people acted from unselfish motives."

"Then it's a painted savage!" said the girl. "All its favours are really bargains. Its gifts are for gifts back again."

“Yes, that is true,” said Mrs. Horn, with no more sense of wrong in the fact than the political economist has in the fact that wages are the measure of necessity and not of merit. “You get what you pay for. It’s a matter of business.” She satisfied herself with this formula, which she did not invent, as fully as if it were a reason; but she did not dislike her niece’s revolt against it. That was part of Margaret’s originality, which pleased her aunt in proportion to her own conventionality; she was really a timid person, and she liked the show of courage which Margaret’s magnanimity often reflected upon her. She had through her a repute, with people who did not know her well, for intellectual and moral qualities; she was supposed to be literary and charitable; she almost had opinions and ideals, but really fell short of their possession. She thought that she set bounds to the girl’s originality because she recognised them. Margaret understood this better than her aunt, and knew that she had consulted her about going to see the Dryfooses out of deference, and with no expectation of luminous instruction. She was used to being a law to herself, but she knew what she might and might not do, so that she was rather a by-law. She was the kind of girl that might have fancies for artists and poets, but might end by marrying a prosperous broker, and leavening a vast lump of moneyed and fashionable life with her culture, generosity, and good-will. The intellectual interests were first with her, but she might be equal to sacrificing them; she had the best heart, but she

might know how to harden it ; if she was eccentric, her social orbit was defined ; comets themselves traverse space on fixed lines. She was like every one else, a congeries of contradictions and inconsistencies, but obedient to the general expectation of what a girl of her position must and must not finally be. Provisionally, she was very much what she liked to be.

VII.

MARGARET VANCE tried to give herself some reason for going to call upon the Dryfooses, but she could find none better than the wish to do a kind thing. This seemed queerer and less and less sufficient as she examined it, and she even admitted a little curiosity as a harmless element in her motive, without being very well satisfied with it. She tried to add a slight sense of social duty, and then she decided to have no motive at all, but simply to pay her visit as she would to any other eligible strangers she saw fit to call upon. She perceived that she must be very careful not to let them see that any other impulse had governed her ; she determined, if possible, to let them patronise *her* ; to be very modest and sincere and diffident, and, above all, not to play a part. This was easy, compared with the choice of a manner that should convey to them the fact that she was not playing a part. When the hesitating Irish serving-man had acknowledged that the ladies were at home, and had taken her card to them, she sat waiting for them in the drawing-room. Her study of its appointments, with their impersonal costliness, gave her no suggestion how to proceed ; the two

sisters were upon her before she had really decided, and she rose to meet them with the conviction that she was going to play a part for want of some chosen means of not doing so. She found herself, before she knew it, making her banjo a property in the little comedy, and professing so much pleasure in the fact that Miss Dryfoos was taking it up; she had herself been so much interested by it. Anything, she said, was a relief from the piano; and then, between the guitar and the banjo, one must really choose the banjo, unless one wanted to devote one's whole natural life to the violin. Of course, there was the mandolin; but Margaret asked if they did not feel that the bit of shell you struck it with interposed a distance between you and the real soul of the instrument; and then it did have such a faint, mosquito little tone! She made much of the question, which they left her to debate alone while they gazed solemnly at her till she characterised the tone of the mandolin, when Mela broke into a large, coarse laugh.

"Well, that's just what it *does* sound like," she explained defiantly to her sister. "I always feel like it was going to settle somewhere, and I want to hit myself a slap before it begins to bite. I don't see what ever brought such a thing into fashion."

Margaret had not expected to be so powerfully seconded, and she asked, after gathering herself together, "And you are both learning the banjo?"

"My, no!" said Mela, "I've gone through enough with the piano. Christine is learning it."

"I'm so glad you are making my banjo useful at the outset, Miss Dryfoos." Both girls stared at her, but found it hard to cope with the fact that this was the lady friend whose banjo Beaton had lent them. "Mr. Beaton mentioned that he had left it here. I hope you'll keep it as long as you find it useful."

At this amiable speech even Christine could not help thanking her. "Of course," she said, "I expect to get another, right off. Mr. Beaton is going to choose it for me."

"You are very fortunate. If you haven't a teacher yet I should so like to recommend mine."

Mela broke out in her laugh again. "Oh, I guess Christine's pretty well suited with the one she's got," she said, with insinuation. Her sister gave her a frowning glance, and Margaret did not tempt her to explain.

"Then that's much better," she said. "I have a kind of superstition in such matters; I don't like to make a second choice. In a shop I like to take the first thing of the kind I'm looking for, and even if I choose further I come back to the original."

"How funny!" said Mela. "Well, now, I'm just the other way. I always take the last thing, after I've picked over all the rest. My luck always seems to be at the bottom of the heap. Now, Christine, she's more like you. I believe she could walk right up blindfolded and put her hand on the thing she wants every time."

"I'm like father," said Christine, softened a little by the celebration of her peculiarity. "He says the

reason so many people don't get what they want is that they don't want it bad enough. Now, when I want a thing, it seems to me that I want it all through."

"Well, that's just like father, too," said Mela. "That's the way he done when he got that eighty-acre piece next to Moffitt that he kept when he sold the farm, and that's got some of the best gas wells on it now that there is anywhere." She addressed the explanation to her sister, to the exclusion of Margaret, who, nevertheless, listened with a smiling face and a resolutely polite air of being a party to the conversation. Mela rewarded her amiability by saying to her finally, "You never been in the natural-gas country, have you?"

"Oh no! And I should so much like to see it!" said Margaret, with a fervour that was partly voluntary.

"Would you? Well, we're kind of sick of it, but I suppose it *would* strike a stranger."

"*I* never got tired of looking at the big wells when they lit them up," said Christine. "It seems as if the world was on fire."

"Yes, and when you see the surface-gas burnun' down in the woods, like it used to by our spring-house—so still, and never spreadun' any, just like a bed of some kind of wild-flowers when you ketch sight of it a piece off."

They began to tell of the wonders of their strange land in an antiphony of reminiscences and descriptions; they unconsciously imputed a merit to them-

selves from the number and violence of the wells on their father's property; they bragged of the high civilisation of Moffitt, which they compared to its advantage with that of New York. They became excited by Margaret's interest in natural gas, and forgot to be suspicious and envious.

She said, as she rose, "Oh, how much I should like to see it all!" Then she made a little pause and added, "I'm so sorry my aunt's Thursdays are over; she never has them after Lent, but we're to have some people Tuesday evening at a little concert which a musical friend is going to give with some other artists. There won't be any banjos, I'm afraid, but there'll be some very good singing, and my aunt would be so glad if you could come with your mother."

She put down her aunt's card on the table near her, while Mela gurgled, as if it were the best joke, "Oh, my! Mother never goes anywhere; you couldn't get her out for love or money." But she was herself overwhelmed with a simple joy at Margaret's politeness, and showed it in a sensuous way, like a child, as if she had been tickled. She came closer to Margaret and seemed about to fawn physically upon her.

"Ain't she just as lovely as she can live?" she demanded of her sister when Margaret was gone.

"I don't know," said Christine. "I guess she wanted to know who Mr. Beaton had been lending her banjo to."

"Pshaw! Do you suppose she's in love with him?" asked Mela, and then she broke into her hoarse laugh at the look her sister gave her. "Well, don't eat *me*, Christine! I wonder who she is, anyway? I'm gown' to git it out of Mr. Beaton the next time he calls. I guess she's somebody. Mrs. Mandel can tell. I wish that old friend of hers would hurry up and git well—or something. But I guess we appeared about as well as she did. I could see she was afraid of you, Christine. I reckon it's gittun' around a little about father; and when it does I don't believe we shall want for callers. Say, are you gown'? To that concert of theirs?"

"I don't know. Not till I know who they are first."

"Well, we've got to hump ourselves if we're gown' to find out before Tuesday."

As she went home Margaret felt wrought in her that most incredible of the miracles, which, nevertheless, any one may make his experience. She felt kindly to these girls because she had tried to make them happy, and she hoped that in the interest she had shown there had been none of the poison of flattery. She was aware that this was a risk she ran in such an attempt to do good. If she had escaped this effect she was willing to leave the rest with Providence.

VIII.

THE notion that a girl of Margaret Vance's traditions would naturally form of girls like Christine and Mela Dryfoos would be that they were abashed in the presence of the new conditions of their lives, and that they must receive the advance she had made them with a certain grateful humility. However they received it, she had made it upon principle, from a romantic conception of duty; but this was the way she imagined they would receive it, because she thought that she would have done so if she had been as ignorant and unbred as they. Her error was in arguing their attitude from her own temperament, and endowing them, for the purposes of argument, with her perspective. They had not the means, intellectual or moral, of feeling as she fancied. If they had remained at home on the farm where they were born, Christine would have grown up that embodiment of impassioned suspicion which we find oftenest in the narrowest spheres, and Mela would always have been a good-natured simpleton; but they would never have doubted their equality with the wisest and the finest. As it was, they had not learned enough at school to doubt it, and the splendour of their father's

success in making money had blinded them for ever to any possible difference against them. They had no question of themselves in the social abeyance to which they had been left in New York. They had been surprised, mystified; it was not what they had expected; there must be some mistake. They were the victims of an accident, which would be repaired as soon as the fact of their father's wealth had got around. They had been steadfast in their faith, through all their disappointment, that they were not only better than most people by virtue of his money, but as good as any; and they took Margaret's visit, so far as they investigated its motive, for a sign that at last it was beginning to get around; of course, a thing could not get around in New York so quick as it could in a small place. They were confirmed in their belief by the sensation of Mrs. Mandel when she returned to duty that afternoon, and they consulted her about going to Mrs. Horn's *musical*. If she had felt any doubt at the name—for there were Horns and Horns—the address on the card put the matter beyond question; and she tried to make her charges understand what a precious chance had befallen them. She did not succeed; they had not the premises, the experience, for a sufficient impression; and she undid her work in part by the effort to explain that Mrs. Horn's standing was independent of money; that though she was positively rich, she was comparatively poor. Christine inferred that Miss Vance had called because she wished to be the first to get in with them since it had begun to get

around. This view commended itself to Mela too, but without warping her from her opinion that Miss Vance was all the same too sweet for anything. She had not so vivid a consciousness of her father's money as Christine had ; but she reposed perhaps all the more confidently upon its power. She was far from thinking meanly of any one who thought highly of her for it ; that seemed so natural a result as to be amiable, even admirable ; she was willing that any such person should get all the good there was in such an attitude toward her.

They discussed the matter that night at dinner before their father and mother, who mostly sat silent at their meals ; the father frowning absently over his plate, with his head close to it, and making play into his mouth with the back of his knife (he had got so far toward the use of his fork as to despise those who still ate from the edge of their knives), and the mother partly missing hers at times in the nervous tremor that shook her face from side to side.

After a while the subject of Mela's hoarse babble and of Christine's high-pitched, thin, sharp forays of assertion and denial in the field which her sister's voice seemed to cover, made its way into the old man's consciousness, and he perceived that they were talking with Mrs. Mandel about it, and that his wife was from time to time offering an irrelevant and mistaken comment. He agreed with Christine, and silently took her view of the affair some time before he made any sign of having listened. There had been a time in his life when other things besides his

money seemed admirable to him. He had once respected himself for the hard-headed, practical common-sense which first gave him standing among his country neighbours ; which made him supervisor, school trustee, justice of the peace, county commissioner, secretary of the Moffitt County Agricultural Society. In those days he had served the public with disinterested zeal and proud ability ; he used to write to the *Lake Shore Farmer* on agricultural topics ; he took part in opposing, through the Moffitt papers, the legislative waste of the people's money ; on the question of selling a local canal to the railroad company, which killed that fine old State work, and let the dry ditch grow up to grass, he might have gone to the Legislature, but he contented himself with defeating the Moffitt member who had voted for the job. If he opposed some measures for the general good, like high-schools and school libraries, it was because he lacked perspective, in his intense individualism, and suspected all expense of being spendthrift. He believed in good district schools, and he had a fondness, crude but genuine, for some kinds of reading—history, and forensics of an elementary sort.

With his good head for figures he doubted doctors and despised preachers ; he thought lawyers were all rascals, but he respected them for their ability ; he was not himself litigious, but he enjoyed the intellectual encounters of a difficult lawsuit, and he often attended a sitting of the fall term of court, when he went to town, for the pleasure of hearing the

speeches. He was a good citizen, and a good husband. As a good father, he was rather severe with his children, and used to whip them, especially the gentle Conrad, who somehow crossed him most, till the twins died. After that he never struck any of them; and from the sight of a blow dealt a horse he turned as if sick. It was a long time before he lifted himself up from his sorrow, and then the will of the man seemed to have been breached through his affections. He let the girls do as they pleased—the twins had been girls; he let them go away to school, and got them a piano. It was they who made him sell the farm. If Conrad had only had their spirit he could have made him keep it, he felt; and he resented the want of support he might have found in a less yielding spirit than his son's.

His moral decay began with his perception of the opportunity of making money quickly and abundantly, which offered itself to him after he sold his farm. He awoke to it slowly, from a desolation in which he tasted the last bitter of homesickness, the utter misery of idleness and listlessness. When he broke down and cried for the hard-working, wholesome life he had lost, he was near the end of this season of despair, but he was also near the end of what was best in himself. He devolved upon a meaner ideal than that of conservative good citizenship, which had been his chief moral experience: the money he had already made without effort and without merit bred its unholy self-love in him; he began to honour money, especially money that had

been won suddenly and in large sums ; for money that had been earned, painfully, slowly, and in little amounts, he had only pity and contempt. The poison of that ambition to go somewhere and be somebody which the local speculators had instilled into him began to work in the vanity which had succeeded his somewhat scornful self-respect ; he rejected Europe as the proper field for his expansion ; he rejected Washington ; he preferred New York, whither the men who have made money and do not yet know that money has made them, all instinctively turn. He came where he could watch his money breed more money, and bring greater increase of its kind in an hour of luck than the toil of hundreds of men could earn in a year. He called it speculation, stocks, the street ; and his pride, his faith in himself, mounted with his luck. He expected, when he had sated his greed, to begin to spend, and he had formulated an intention to build a great house, to add another to the palaces of the country-bred millionaires who have come to adorn the great city. In the meantime he made little account of the things that occupied his children, except to fret at the ungrateful indifference of his son to the interests that could alone make a man of him. He did not know whether his daughters were in society or not ; with people coming and going in the house he would have supposed they must be so, no matter who the people were ; in some vague way he felt that he had hired society in Mrs. Mandel, at so much a year. He never met a superior himself. except now and then a man of twenty or

thirty millions to his one or two, and then he felt his soul creep within him, without a sense of social inferiority ; it was a question of financial inferiority ; and though Dryfoos's soul bowed itself and crawled, it was with a gambler's admiration of wonderful luck. Other men said these many-millioned millionaires were smart, and got their money by sharp practices to which lesser men could not attain ; but Dryfoos believed that he could compass the same ends, by the same means, with the same chances ; he respected their money, not them.

When he now heard Mrs. Mandel and his daughters talking of that person, whoever she was, that Mrs. Mandel seemed to think had honoured his girls by coming to see them, his curiosity was pricked as much as his pride was galled.

"Well, anyway," said Mela, "I don't care whether Christine's gown' or not ; *I* am. And you got to go with me, Mrs. Mandel."

"Well, there's a little difficulty," said Mrs. Mandel, with her unfailing dignity and politeness. "I haven't been asked, you know."

"Then what are we gown' to do?" demanded Mela, almost crossly. She was physically too amiable, she felt too well corporeally, ever to be quite cross. "She might 'a' knowed—well *known*—we couldn't 'a' come alone, in New York. I don't see why we couldn't. I don't call it much of an invitation."

"I suppose she thought you could come with your mother," Mrs. Mandel suggested.

"She didn't say anything about mother. Did she,

Christine? Or, yes, she did, too. And I told her she couldn't git mother out. Don't you remember?"

"I didn't pay much attention," said Christine. "I wasn't certain we wanted to go."

"I reckon you wasn't goun' to let her see that we cared much," said Mela, half reproachful, half proud of this attitude of Christine. "Well, I don't see but what we got to stay at home." She laughed at this lame conclusion of the matter.

"Perhaps Mr. Conrad—you could very properly take him without an express invitation——" Mrs. Mandel began.

Conrad looked up in alarm and protest. "I—I don't think I could go that evening——"

"What's the reason?" his father broke in harshly. "You're not such a sheep that you're afraid to go into company with your sisters? Or are you too good to go with them?"

"If it's to be anything like that night when them hussies come out and danced that way," said Mrs. Dryfoos, "I don't blame Coonrod for not wantun' to go. I never saw the beat of it."

Mela sent a yelling laugh across the table to her mother. "Well, I wish Miss Vanee could 'a' heard that! Why, mother, did you think it was like the ballet?"

"Well, I didn't know, Mely, child," said the old woman. "I didn't know *what* it was like. I hain't never been to one, and you can't be too keerful where you go, in a place like New York."

"What's the reason you can't go?" Dryfoos

ignored the passage between his wife and daughter in making this demand of his son, with a sour face.

"I have an engagement that night—it's one of our meetings——"

"I reckon you can let your meeting go for one night," said Dryfoos. "It can't be so important as all that, that you must disappoint your sisters."

"I don't like to disappoint those poor creatures. They depend so much upon the meetings——"

"I reckon they can stand it for one night," said the old man. He added, "The poor ye have with you always."

"That's so, Coonrod," said his mother. "It's the Saviour's own words."

"Yes, mother. But they're not meant just as father used them."

"How do you know how they were meant? Or how I used them?" cried the father. "Now you just make your plans to go with the girls, Tuesday night. They can't go alone, and Mrs. Mandel can't go with them."

"Pshaw!" said Mela. "We don't want to take Conrad away from his meetun', do we, Chris?"

"I don't know," said Christine, in her high, fine voice. "They could get along without him for one night, as father says."

"Well, I'm not agoun' to take him," said Mela. "Now, Mrs. Mandel, just think out some other way. Say! What's the reason we couldn't get somebody else to take us just as well? Ain't that rulable?"

"It would be allowable——"

"Allowable, I *mean*," Mela corrected herself.

"But it might look a little significant, unless it was some old family friend."

"Well, let's get Mr. Fulkerson to take us. He's the oldest family friend *we* got."

"I won't go with Mr. Fulkerson," said Christine serenely.

"Why, I'm sure, Christine," her mother pleaded, "Mr. Fulkerson is a very good young man, and very nice appearun'."

Mela shouted, "He's ten times as pleasant as that old Mr. Beaton of Christine's!"

Christine made no effort to break the constraint that fell upon the table at this sally, but her father said, "Christine is right, Mela. It wouldn't do for you to go with any other young man. Conrad will go with you."

"I'm not certain I want to go, yet," said Christine.

"Well, settle that among yourselves. But if you want to go, your brother will go with you."

"Of course, Coonrod'll go, if his sisters wants him to," the old woman pleaded. "I reckon it ain't agoun' to be anything very bad; and if it is, Coonrod, why you can just git right up and come out."

"It will be all right, mother. And I will go, of course."

"There, now, I knowed you would, Coonrod. Now, fawther!" This appeal was to make the old man say something in recognition of Conrad's sacrifice.

"You'll always find," he said, "that it's those of your own household that have the first claim on you."

"That's so, Coonrod", urged his mother. "It's Bible truth. Your fawther ain't a perfesser, but he always read his Bible. Search the Scriptures. That's what it means."

"Laws!" cried Mely, "a body can see, easy enough from mother, where Conrad's wantun' to be a preacher comes from. I should 'a' thought she'd 'a' wanted to been one herself."

"Let your women keep silence in the churches," said the old woman solemnly.

"There you go again, mother! I guess if you was to say that to some of the lady ministers nowadays, you'd git yourself into trouble." Mela looked round for approval, and gurgled out a hoarse laugh.

IX.

THE Dryfooses went late to Mrs. Horn's *musicale* in spite of Mrs. Mandel's advice. Christine made the delay, both because she wished to show Miss Vance that she was not anxious, and because she had some vague notion of the distinction of arriving late at any sort of entertainment. Mrs. Mandel insisted upon the difference between this *musicule* and an ordinary reception; but Christine rather fancied disturbing a company that had got seated, and perhaps making people rise and stand, while she found her way to her place, as she had seen them do for a tardy comer at the theatre.

Mela, whom she did not admit to her reasons or feelings always, followed her with the servile admiration she had for all that Christine did; and she took on trust as somehow successful the result of Christine's obstinacy, when they were allowed to stand against the wall at the back of the room through the whole of the long piece begun just before they came in. There had been no one to receive them; a few people, in the rear rows of chairs near them, turned their heads to glance at them, and then looked away again. Mela had her

misgivings ; but at the end of the piece Miss Vance came up to them at once, and then Mela knew that she had her eyes on them all the time, and that Christine must have been right. Christine said nothing about their coming late, and so Mela did not make any excuse, and Miss Vance seemed to expect none. She glanced with a sort of surprise at Conrad, when Christine introduced him ; Mela did not know whether she liked their bringing him, till she shook hands with him, and said, "Oh, I am very glad indeed ! Mr. Dryfoos and I have met before." Without explaining where or when, she led them to her aunt and presented them, and then said, "I'm going to put you with some friends of yours," and quickly seated them next the Marches. Mela liked that well enough ; she thought she might have some joking with Mr. March, for all his wife was so stiff ; but the look which Christine wore seemed to forbid, provisionally at least, any such recreation. On her part, Christine was cool with the Marches. It went through her mind that they must have told Miss Vance they knew her ; and perhaps they had boasted of her intimacy. She relaxed a little toward them when she saw Beaton leaning against the wall at the end of the row next Mrs. March. Then she conjectured that he might have told Miss Vance of her acquaintance with the Marches, and she bent forward and nodded to Mrs. March across Conrad, Mela, and Mr. March. She conceived of him as a sort of hand of her father's, but she was willing to take them at their

apparent social valuation for the time. She leaned back in her chair, and did not look up at Beaton after the first furtive glance, though she felt his eyes on her.

The music began again almost at once, before Mela had time to make Conrad tell her where Miss Vance had met him before. She would not have minded interrupting the music; but every one else seemed so attentive, even Christine that she had not the courage.

The concert went on to an end without realising for her the ideal of pleasure which one ought to find in society. She was not exacting, but it seemed to her there were very few young men, and when the music was over, and their opportunity came to be sociable, they were not very sociable. They were not introduced, for one thing; but it appeared to Mela that they might have got introduced, if they had any sense; she saw them looking at her, and she was glad she had dressed so much; she was dressed more than any other lady there, and either because she was the most dressed of any person there, or because it had got around who her father was, she felt that she had made an impression on the young men. In her satisfaction with this, and from her good nature, she was contented to be served with her refreshments after the concert by Mr. March, and to remain joking with him. She was at her ease; she let her hoarse voice out in her largest laugh; she accused him, to the admiration of those near, of getting her into a perfect gale. It appeared

to her, in her own pleasure, her mission to illustrate to the rather subdued people about her what a good time really was, so that they could have it if they wanted it. Her joy was crowned when March modestly professed himself unworthy to monopolise her, and explained how selfish he felt in talking to a young lady when there were so many young men dying to do so.

"Oh, pshaw dyun', yes!" cried Mela, tasting the irony. "I guess I see them!"

He asked if he might really introduce a friend of his to her, and she said, Well, yes, if he thought he could live to get to her; and March brought up a man whom he thought very young and Mela thought very old. He was a contributor to *Every Other Week*, and so March knew him; he believed himself a student of human nature in behalf of literature, and he now set about studying Mela. He tempted her to express her opinion on all points, and he laughed so amiably at the boldness and humorous vigour of her ideas that she was delighted with him. She asked him if he was a New-Yorker by birth; and she told him she pitied him, when he said he had never been West. She professed herself perfectly sick of New York, and urged him to go to Moffitt if he wanted to see a real live town. He wondered if it would do to put her into literature just as she was, with all her slang and brag, but he decided that he would have to subdue her a great deal: he did not see how he could reconcile the facts of her conversation with the facts of her appearance:

her beauty, her splendour of dress, her apparent right to be where she was. These things perplexed him; he was afraid the great American novel, if true, must be incredible. Mela said he ought to hear her sister go on about New York when they first came; but she reckoned that Christine was getting so she could put up with it a little better, now. She looked significantly across the room to the place where Christine was now talking with Beaton; and the student of human nature asked, Was she here? and, Would she introduce him? Mela said she would, the first chance she got; and she added, They would be much pleased to have him call. She felt herself to be having a beautiful time, and she got directly upon such intimate terms with the student of human nature that she laughed with him about some peculiarities of his, such as his going so far about to ask things he wanted to know from her; she said she never did believe in beating about the bush much. She had noticed the same thing in Miss Vance when she came to call that day; and when the young man owned that he came rather a good deal to Mrs. Horn's house, she asked him, Well, what sort of a girl was Miss Vance, anyway, and where did he suppose she had met her brother? The student of human nature could not say as to this, and as to Miss Vance he judged it safest to treat of the non-society side of her character, her activity in charity, her special devotion to the work among the poor on the East Side, which she personally engaged in.

"Oh, that's where Conrad goes, too!" Mela interrupted. "I'll bet anything that's where she met him. I *wisht* I could tell Christine! But I suppose she would want to kill me, if I was to speak to her *now*."

The student of human nature said politely, "Oh, shall I take you to her?"

Mela answered, "I guess you better *not*!" with a laugh so significant that he could not help his inferences concerning both Christine's absorption in the person she was talking with, and the habitual violence of her temper. He made note of how Mela helplessly spoke of all her family by their names, as if he were already intimate with them; he fancied that if he could get that in skilfully, it would be a valuable colour in his study; the English lord whom she should astonish with it, began to form himself out of the dramatic nebulosity in his mind, and to whirl on a definite orbit in American society. But he was puzzled to decide whether Mela's willingness to take him into her confidence on short notice was typical or personal: the trait of a daughter of the natural-gas millionaire, or a foible of her own.

Beaton talked with Christine the greater part of the evening that was left after the concert. He was very grave, and took the tone of a fatherly friend; he spoke guardedly of the people present, and moderated the severity of some of Christine's judgments of their looks and costumes. He did this out of a sort of unreasoned allegiance to Margaret, whom he was in the mood of wishing to please by being

very kind and good, as she always was. He had the sense also of atoning by this behaviour for some reckless things he had said before that to Christine ; he put on a sad, reproving air with her, and gave her the feeling of being held in check.

She chafed at it, and said, glancing at Margaret in talk with her brother, "I don't think Miss Vance is so very pretty, do you?"

"I never think whether she's pretty or not," said Beaton, with dreamy affectation. "She is merely perfect. Does she know your brother?"

"So *she* says. I didn't suppose Conrad ever went anywhere, except to tenement-houses."

"It might have been there," Beaton suggested. "She goes among friendless people everywhere."

"May be that's the reason she came to see *us*!" said Christine.

Beaton looked at her with his smouldering eyes, and felt the wish to say, "Yes, it was exactly that," but he only allowed himself to deny the possibility of any such motive in that case. He added, "I am so glad you know her, Miss Dryfoos. I never met Miss Vance without feeling myself better and truer, somehow ; or the wish to be so."

"And you think *we* might be improved too?" Christine retorted. "Well, I must say you're not very flattering, Mr. Beaton, anyway."

Beaton would have liked to answer her according to her cattishness, with a good clawing sarcasm that would leave its smart in her pride ; but he was being good, and he could not change all

at once. Besides, the girl's attitude under the social honour done her interested him. He was sure she had never been in such good company before, but he could see that she was not in the least affected by the experience. He had told her who this person and that was; and he saw she had understood that the names were of consequence; but she seemed to feel her equality with them all. Her serenity was not obviously akin to the savage stoicism in which Beaton hid his own consciousness of social inferiority; but having won his way in the world so far by his talent, his personal quality, he did not conceive the simple fact in her case. Christine was self-possessed because she felt that a knowledge of her father's fortune had got around, and she had the peace which money gives to ignorance; but Beaton attributed her poise to indifference to social values. This, while he inwardly sneered at it, avenged him upon his own too keen sense of them, and, together with his temporary allegiance to Margaret's goodness, kept him from retaliating Christine's vulgarity. He said, "I don't see how that could be," and left the question of flattery to settle itself.

The people began to go away, following each other up to take leave of Mrs. Horn. Christine watched them with unconcern, and either because she would not be governed by the general movement, or because she liked being with Beaton, gave no sign of going. Mela was still talking to the student of human nature, sending out her laugh in deep gurgles

amidst the unimaginable confidences she was making him about herself, her family, the staff of *Every Other Week*, Mrs. Mandel, and the kind of life they had all led before she came to them. He was not a blind devotee of art for art's sake, and though he felt that if one could portray Mela just as she was she would be the richest possible material, he was rather ashamed to know some of the things she told him; and he kept looking anxiously about for a chance of escape. The company had reduced itself to the Dryfoos groups and some friends of Mrs. Horn's who had the right to linger, when Margaret crossed the room with Conrad to Christine and Beaton.

"I'm so glad, Miss Dryfoos, to find that I was not quite a stranger to you all when I ventured to call, the other day. Your brother and I are rather old acquaintances, though I never knew who he was before. I don't know just how to say we met where he is valued so much. I suppose I mustn't try to say how much," she added with a look of deep regard at him.

Conrad blushed and stood folding his arms tight over his breast, while his sister received Margaret's confession with the suspicion which was her first feeling in regard to any new thing. What she concluded was that this girl was trying to get in with them, for reasons of her own. She said: "Yes; it's the first *I* ever heard of his knowing you. He's so much taken up with his meetings, he didn't want to come to-night."

Margaret drew in her lip before she answered, without apparent resentment of the awkwardness or

ungraciousness, whichever she found it, "I don't wonder! You become so absorbed in such work that you think nothing else is worth while. But I'm glad Mr. Dryfoos could come with you; I'm so glad you could all come; I knew you would enjoy the music. Do sit down——"

"No," said Christine bluntly; "we must be going. Mela!" she called out, "come!"

The last group about Mrs. Horn looked round, but Christine advanced upon them undismayed, and took the hand Mrs. Horn promptly gave her. "Well, I must bid you good night."

"Oh, good night," murmured the elder lady. "So very kind of you to come."

"I've had the best kind of a time," said Mela cordially. "I hain't laughed so much, I don't know when."

"Oh, I'm glad you enjoyed it," said Mrs. Horn in the same polite murmur she had used with Christine; but she said nothing to either sister about any future meeting.

They were apparently not troubled. Mela said over her shoulder to the student of human nature, "The next time I see you I'll *give* it to you for what you said about Moffitt."

Margaret made some entreating paces after them, but she did not succeed in covering the retreat of the sisters against critical conjecture. She could only say to Conrad, as if recurring to the subject, "I *hope* we can get our friends to play for us some night. I know it isn't any real help, but such things take

the poor creatures out of themselves for the time being, don't you think?"

"Oh yes," he answered. "They're good in that way." He turned back hesitatingly to Mrs. Horn, and said, with a blush, "I thank you for a happy evening."

"Oh, I am very glad," she replied in her murmur.

One of the old friends of the house arched her eyebrows in saying good night, and offered the two young men remaining seats home in her carriage. Beaton gloomily refused, and she kept herself from asking the student of human nature, till she had got him into her carriage, "What is Moffitt, and what did you say about it?"

"Now you see, Margaret," said Mrs. Horn, with bated triumph, when the people were all gone.

"Yes, I see," the girl consented. "From one point of view, of course it's been a failure. I don't think we've given Miss Dryfoos a pleasure, but perhaps nobody could. And at least we've given her the opportunity of enjoying herself."

"Such people," said Mrs. Horn philosophically, "people with their money must of course be received sooner or later. You can't keep them out. Only, I believe I would rather let some one else begin with them. The Leightons didn't come?"

"I sent them cards. I *couldn't* call again."

Mrs. Horn sighed a little. "I suppose Mr. Dryfoos is one of your fellow-philanthropists?"

"He's one of the workers," said Margaret. "I

met him several times at the Hall, but I only knew his first name. I think he's a great friend of Father Benedict; he seems devoted to the work. Don't you think he looks *good*?"

"Very," said Mrs. Horn, with a colour of censure in her assent. "The younger girl seemed more amiable than her sister. But what manners!"

"Dreadful!" said Margaret, with knit brows, and a pursed mouth of humorous suffering. "But she appeared to feel very much at home."

"Oh, as to that, neither of them was much abashed. Do you suppose Mr. Beaton gave the other one some hints for that quaint dress of hers? I don't imagine that black and lace is her own invention. She seems to have some sort of strange fascination for him."

"She's very picturesque," Margaret explained. "And artists see points in people that the rest of us don't."

"Could it be her money?" Mrs. Horn insinuated. "He must be very poor."

"But he isn't base," retorted the girl with a generous indignation that made her aunt smile.

"Oh no; but if he fancies her so picturesque, it doesn't follow that he would object to her being rich."

"It would with a man like Mr. Beaton!"

"You are an idealist, Margaret. I suppose your Mr. March has some disinterested motive in paying court to Miss Mela—Pamela, I suppose, is her name. He talked to her longer than her literature would have lasted."

"He seems a very kind person," said Margaret.

"And Mr. Dryfoos pays his salary?"

"I don't know anything about that. But that wouldn't make any difference with him."

Mrs. Horn laughed out at this security; but she was not displeased by the nobleness which it came from. She liked Margaret to be high-minded, and was really not distressed by any good that was in her.

The Marches walked home, both because it was not far, and because they must spare in carriage hire at any rate. As soon as they were out of the house, she applied a point of conscience to him.

"I don't see how you could talk to that girl so long, Basil, and make her laugh so."

"Why, there seemed no one else to do it, till I thought of Kendricks."

"Yes, but I kept thinking, Now he's pleasant to her because he thinks it's to his interest. If she had no relation to *Every Other Week*, he wouldn't waste his time on her."

"Isabel," March complained, "I wish you wouldn't think of me in *he*, *him*, and *his*: I never personalise you in my thoughts: you remain always a vague unindividualised essence, not quite without form and void, but nounless and pronounless. I call that a much more beautiful mental attitude toward the object of one's affections. But if you must *he* and *him* and *his* me in your thoughts, I wish you'd have more kindly thoughts of me."

"Do you deny that it's true, Basil?"

"Do you believe that it's true, Isabel?"

"No matter. But could you excuse it if it were?"

"Ah, I see you'd have been capable of it in my place, and you're ashamed."

"Yes," sighed the wife, "I'm afraid that I should. But tell me that *you* wouldn't, Basil!"

"I can tell you that I wasn't. But I suppose that in a real exigency, I could truckle to the proprietary Dryfooses as well as you."

"Oh no; you mustn't, dear! I'm a woman, and I'm dreadfully afraid. But you must always be a man, especially with that horrid old Mr. Dryfoos. Promise me that you'll never yield the least point to him in a matter of right and wrong!"

"Not, if he's right and I'm wrong?"

"Don't trifle, dear! You know what I mean. Will you promise?"

"I'll promise to submit the point to you, and let you do the yielding. As for me, I shall be adamant. Nothing I like better."

"They're dreadful, even that poor, good young fellow, who's so different from all the rest; he's awful, too, because you feel that he's a martyr to them."

"And I never did like martyrs a great deal," March interposed.

"I wonder how they came to be there," Mrs. March pursued, unmindful of his joke.

"That is exactly what seemed to be puzzling Miss Mela about us. She asked, and I explained

as well as I could; and then she told me that Miss Vance had come to call on them and invited them; and first they didn't know how they could come till they thought of making Conrad bring them. But she didn't say why Miss Vance called on them. Mr. Dryfoos doesn't employ *her* on *Every Other Week*. But I suppose she has her own vile little motive."

"It can't be their *money*; it *can't* be!" sighed Mrs. March.

"Well, I don't know. We all respect money."

"Yes, but Miss Vance's position is so secure. She needn't pay court to those stupid, vulgar people."

"Well, let's console ourselves with the belief that she would, if she needed. Such people as the Dryfooses are the raw material of good society. It isn't made up of refined or meritorious people—professors and littérateurs, ministers and musicians, and their families. All the fashionable people there to-night were like the Dryfooses a generation or two ago. I dare say the material works up faster now, and in a season or two you won't know the Dryfooses from the other plutocrats. *They* will—a little better than they do now; they'll see a difference, but nothing radical, nothing painful. People who get up in the world by service to others—through letters, or art, or science—may have their modest little misgivings as to their social value, but people that rise by money—especially if their gains are sudden—never have. And that's the kind of people that form our nobility; there's no use

pretending that we haven't a nobility; we might as well pretend we haven't first-class cars in the presence of a vestibuled Pullman. Those girls had no more doubt of their right to be there than if they had been duchesses: *we* thought it was very nice of Miss Vance to come and ask us, but *they* didn't; they weren't afraid, or the least embarrassed; they were perfectly natural—like born aristocrats. And you may be sure that if the plutocracy that now owns the country ever sees fit to take on the outward signs of an aristocracy—titles, and arms, and ancestors—it won't falter from any inherent question of its worth. Money prizes and honours itself, and if there is anything it hasn't got, it believes it can buy it."

"Well, Basil," said his wife, "I hope you won't get infected with Lindau's ideas of rich people. Some of them are very good and kind."

"Who denies that? Not even Lindau himself. It's all right. And the great thing is that the evening's enjoyment is over. I've got my society smile off, and I'm radiantly happy. Go on with your little pessimistic diatribes, Isabel; you can't spoil *my* pleasure."

"I could see," said Mela, as she and Christine drove home together, "that she was as jealous as she could be, all the time you was talkun' to Mr. Beaton. She pretended to be talkun' to Conrad, but she kep' her eye on you pretty close, I can tell you. I bet she just got us there to see how him

and you would act together. And I reckon she was satisfied. He's dead gone on you, Chris."

Christine listened with a dreamy pleasure to the flatteries with which Mela plied her in the hope of some return in kind, and not at all because she felt spitefully toward Miss Vance, or in anywise wished her ill. "Who was that fellow with you so long?" asked Christine. "I suppose you turned yourself inside out to him, like you always do."

Mela was transported by the cruel ingratitude. "It's a lie! I didn't tell him a single thing."

Conrad walked home, choosing to do so because he did not wish to hear his sisters' talk of the evening, and because there was a tumult in his spirit which he wished to let have its way. In his life with its single purpose, defeated by stronger wills than his own, and now struggling partially to fulfil itself in acts of devotion to others, the thought of women had entered scarcely more than in that of a child. His ideals were of a virginal vagueness; faces, voices, gestures had filled his fancy at times, but almost passionlessly; and the sensation that he now indulged was a kind of worship, ardent, but reverent and exalted. The brutal experiences of the world make us forget that there are such natures in it, and that they seem to come up out of the lowly earth as well as down from the high heaven. In the heart of this man well on toward thirty there had never been left the stain of a base thought; not that suggestion and conjecture had not visited him, but

that he had not entertained them, or in anywise made them his. In a Catholic age and country, he would have been one of those monks who are sainted after death for the angelic purity of their lives, and whose names are invoked by believers in moments of trial, like San Luigi Gonzaga. As he now walked along thinking, with a lover's beatified smile on his face, of how Margaret Vance had spoken and looked, he dramatised scenes in which he approved himself to her by acts of goodness and unselfishness, and died to please her for the sake of others. He made her praise him for them, to his face, when he disclaimed their merit, and after his death, when he could not. All the time he was poignantly sensible of her grace, her elegance, her style; they seemed to intoxicate him; some tones of her voice thrilled through his nerves, and some looks turned his brain with a delicious, swooning sense of her beauty; her refinement bewildered him. But all this did not admit the idea of possession, even of aspiration. At the most his worship only set her beyond the love of other men as far as beyond his own.

PART FOURTH.

I.

NOT long after Lent, Fulkerson set before Dryfoos one day his scheme for a dinner in celebration of the success of *Every Other Week*. Dryfoos had never meddled in any manner with the conduct of the periodical; but Fulkerson easily saw that he was proud of his relation to it, and he proceeded upon the theory that he would be willing to have this relation known. On the days when he had been lucky in stocks, he was apt to drop in at the office on Eleventh Street, on his way uptown, and listen to Fulkerson's talk. He was on good enough terms with March, who revised his first impressions of the man, but they had not much to say to each other, and it seemed to March that Dryfoos was even a little afraid of him, as of a piece of mechanism he had acquired, but did not quite understand; he left the working of it to Fulkerson, who no doubt bragged of it sufficiently. The old man seemed to have as little to say to his son; he shut himself up with Fulkerson, where the others could hear the man-

ager begin and go on with an unstinted flow of talk about *Every Other Week*; for Fulkerson never talked of anything else if he could help it, and was always bringing the conversation back to it if it strayed.

The day he spoke of the dinner he rose and called from his door, "March, I say, come down here a minute, will you? Conrad, I want you, too."

The editor and the publisher found the manager and the proprietor seated on opposite sides of the table. "It's about those funeral baked meats, you know," Fulkerson explained, "and I was trying to give Mr. Dryfoos some idea of what we wanted to do. That is, what I wanted to do," he continued, turning from March to Dryfoos. "March, here, is opposed to it, of course. *He'd* like to publish *Every Other Week* on the sly; keep it out of the papers, and off the news-stands; he's a modest Boston petunia, and he shrinks from publicity; but I am not that kind of herb myself, and I want all the publicity we can get—beg, borrow, or steal—for this thing. I say that you can't work the sacred rites of hospitality in a better cause, and what I propose is a little dinner for the purpose of recognising the hit we've made with this thing. My idea was to strike you for the necessary funds, and do the thing on a handsome scale. The term little dinner is a mere figure of speech. A little dinner wouldn't make a big talk, and what we want is the big talk, at present, if we don't lay up a cent. My notion was that pretty soon after Lent, now, when everybody is feeling just right, we should begin to

send out our paragraphs, affirmative, negative, and explanatory, and along about the first of May we should sit down about a hundred strong, the most distinguished people in the country, and solemnise our triumph. There it is in a nutshell. I might expand and I might expound, but that's the sum and substance of it."

Fulkerson stopped, and ran his eyes eagerly over the faces of his three listeners, one after the other. March was a little surprised when Dryfoos turned to him, but that reference of the question seemed to give Fulkerson particular pleasure: "What do you think, Mr. March?"

The editor leaned back in his chair. "I don't pretend to have Mr. Fulkerson's genius for advertising; but it seems to me a little early yet. We might celebrate later when we've got more to celebrate. At present we're a pleasing novelty, rather than a fixed fact."

"Ah, you don't get the idea!" said Fulkerson. "What we want to do with this dinner is to fix the fact."

"Am I going to come in anywhere?" the old man interrupted.

"You're going to come in at the head of the procession! We are going to strike everything that is imaginative and romantic in the newspaper soul with you and your history and your fancy for going in for this thing. I can start you in a paragraph that will travel through all the newspapers, from Maine to Texas and from Alaska to Florida. We

have had all sorts of rich men backing up literary enterprises, but the natural-gas man in literature is a new thing, and the combination of your picturesque past and your æsthetic present is something that will knock out the sympathies of the American public the first round. I feel," said Fulkerson, with a tremor of pathos in his voice, "that *Every Other Week* is at a disadvantage before the public as long as it's supposed to be *my* enterprise, *my* idea. As far as I'm known at all, I'm known simply as a syndicate man, and nobody in the press believes that I've got the money to run the thing on a grand scale; a suspicion of insolvency must attach to it sooner or later, and the fellows on the press will work up that impression, sooner or later, if we don't give them something else to work up. Now, as soon as I begin to give it away to the correspondents that *you're* in it, with your untold millions—that in fact it was your idea from the start, that you originated it to give full play to the humanitarian tendencies of Conrad here, who's always had these theories of co-operation, and longed to realise them for the benefit of our struggling young writers and artists——"

March had listened with growing amusement to the mingled burlesque and earnest of Fulkerson's self-sacrificing impudence, and with wonder as to how far Dryfoos was consenting to his preposterous proposition, when Conrad broke out, "Mr. Fulkerson, I could not allow you to do that. It would not be true; I did not wish to be here; and—and what I

think—what I wish to do—that is something I will not let any one put me in a false position about. No!” The blood rushed into the young man’s gentle face, and he met his father’s glance with defiance.

Dryfoos turned from him to Fulkerson without speaking, and Fulkerson said caressingly, “Why, of course, Coonrod! I know how you feel, and I shouldn’t let anything of that sort go out uncontradicted afterwards. But there isn’t anything in these times that would give us better standing with the public than some hint of the way you feel about such things. The public expects to be interested, and nothing would interest it more than to be told that the success of *Every Other Week* sprang from the first application of the principle of *Live and let Live* to a literary enterprise. It would look particularly well, coming from you and your father, but if you object, we can leave that part out; though if you approve of the principle I don’t see why you *need* object. The main thing is to let the public know that it owes this thing to the liberal and enlightened spirit of one of the foremost capitalists of the country, and that his purposes are not likely to be betrayed in the hands of his son. I should get a little cut made from a photograph of your father, and supply it gratis with the paragraphs.”

“I guess,” said the old man, “we will get along without the cut.”

Fulkerson laughed. “Well, well! Have it your own way. But the sight of your face in the patent

outsides of the country press, would be worth half a dozen subscribers in every school district throughout the length and breadth of this fair land."

"There was a fellow," Dryfoos explained in an aside to March, "that was getting up a history of Moffett, and he asked me to let him put a steel engraving of me in. He said a good many prominent citizens were going to have theirs in, and his price was a hundred and fifty dollars. I told him I couldn't let mine go for less than two hundred, and when he said he could give me a splendid plate for that money, I said I should want it cash. You never saw a fellow more astonished when he got it through him that I expected *him* to pay the two hundred."

Fulkerson laughed in keen appreciation of the joke. "Well, sir, I guess *Every Other Week* will pay you that much. But if you won't sell at any price, all right; we must try to worry along without the light of your countenance on the posters, but we got to have it for the banquet."

"I don't seem to feel very hungry, yet," said the old man drily.

"Oh, *l'appétit vient en mangeant*, as our French friends say. You'll be hungry enough when you see the preliminary Little Neck clam. It's too late for oysters."

"Doesn't that fact seem to point to a postponement till they get back, sometime in October," March suggested.

"No, no!" said Fulkerson, "you don't catch on

to the business end of this thing, my friends. You're proceeding on something like the old exploded idea that the demand creates the supply, when everybody knows, if he's watched the course of modern events, that it's just as apt to be the other way. I contend that we've got a real substantial success to celebrate now; but even if we hadn't, the celebration would do more than anything else to create the success, if we got it properly before the public. People will say, Those fellows are not fools; they wouldn't go and rejoice over their magazine unless they had got a big thing in it. And the state of feeling we should produce in the public mind would make a boom of perfectly unprecedented grandeur for *E. O. W.* Heigh?"

He looked sunnily from one to the other in succession. The elder Dryfoos said, with his chin on the top of his stick, "I reckon those Little Neck clams will keep."

"Well, just as you say," Fulkerson cheerfully assented. "I understand you to agree to the general principle of a little dinner?"

"The smaller the better," said the old man.

"Well, I say a little dinner because the idea of that seems to cover the case, even if we vary the plan a little. I *had* thought of a reception, may be, that would include the lady contributors and artists, and the wives and daughters of the other contributors. That would give us the chance to ring in a lot of society correspondents and get the thing written up in first-class shape. By the *way*!" cried

Fulkerson, slapping himself on the leg, "why not have the dinner *and* the reception *both*?"

"I don't understand," said Dryfoos.

"Why, have a select little dinner for ten or twenty choice spirits of the male persuasion, and then about ten o'clock, throw open your palatial drawing-rooms and admit the females to champagne, salads, and ices. It is the very thing! Come!"

"What do *you* think of it, Mr. March?" asked Dryfoos, on whose social inexperience Fulkerson's words projected no very intelligible image, and who perhaps hoped for some more light.

"It's a beautiful vision," said March, "and if it will take more time to realise it I think I approve. I approve of anything that will delay Mr. Fulkerson's advertising orgie."

"Then," Fulkerson pursued, "we could have the pleasure of Miss Christine and Miss Mela's company; and may be Mrs. Dryfoos would look in on us in the course of the evening. There's no hurry, as Mr. March suggests, if we can give the thing this shape. I will cheerfully adopt the idea of my honourable colleague."

March laughed at his impudence, but at heart he was ashamed of Fulkerson for proposing to make use of Dryfoos and his house in that way. He fancied something appealing in the look that the old man turned on him, and something indignant in Conrad's flush; but probably this was only his fancy. He reflected that neither of them could feel it as people of more worldly knowledge would, and

he consoled himself with the fact that Fulkerson was really not such a charlatan as he seemed. But it went through his mind that this was a strange end for all Dryfoos's money-making to come to ; and he philosophically accepted the fact of his own humble fortunes when he reflected how little his money could buy for such a man. It was an honourable use that Fulkerson was putting it to in *Every Other Week* ; it might be far more creditably spent on such an enterprise than on horses, or wines, or women, the usual resources of the brute rich ; and if it were to be lost, it might better be lost that way than in stocks. He kept a smiling face turned to Dryfoos while these irreverent considerations occupied him, and hardened his heart against father and son and their possible emotions.

The old man rose to put an end to the interview. He only repeated, "I guess those clams will keep till fall."

But Fulkerson was apparently satisfied with the progress he had made ; and when he joined March for the stroll homeward after office hours, he was able to detach his mind from the subject, as if content to leave it.

"This is about the best part of the year in New York," he said. In some of the areas the grass had sprouted, and the tender young foliage had loosened itself from the buds on a sidewalk tree here and there ; the soft air was full of spring, and the delicate sky, far aloof, had the look it never wears at any other season. "It ain't a time of year to com-

plain much of, anywhere; but I don't want anything better than the month of May in New York. Farther South it's too hot, and I've been in Boston in May when that east wind of yours made every nerve in my body get up and howl. I reckon the weather has a good deal to do with the local temperament. The reason a New York man takes life so easily with all his rush is that his climate don't worry him. But a Boston man must be rasped the whole while by the edge in his air. That accounts for his sharpness; and when he's lived through twenty-five or thirty Boston Mays, he gets to thinking that Providence has some particular use for him, or he wouldn't have survived, and that makes him conceited. See?"

"I see," said March. "But I don't know how you're going to work that idea into an advertisement, exactly."

"Oh, pshaw, now, March! You don't think I've got that on the brain all the time?"

"You were gradually leading up to *Every Other Week*, somehow."

"No, sir; I wasn't. I was just thinking what a different creature a Massachusetts man was from a Virginian. And yet I suppose they're both as pure English stock as you'll get anywhere in America. March, I think Colonel Woodburn's paper is going to make a hit."

"You've got there! When it knocks down the sale about one-half, I shall know it's made a hit."

"I'm not afraid," said Fulkerson. "That thing

is going to attract attention. It's well written—you can take the pomposity out of it, here and there—and it's novel. Our people like a bold strike, and it's going to shake them up tremendously to have serfdom advocated on high moral grounds as the only solution of the labour problem. You see in the first place he goes for their sympathies by the way he portrays the actual relations of capital and labour; he shows how things have got to go from bad to worse, and then he trots out his little old hobby, and proves that if slavery had not been interfered with, it would have perfected itself in the interest of humanity. He makes a pretty strong plea for it."

March threw back his head and laughed. "He's converted you! I swear, Fulkerson, if we had accepted and paid for an article advocating cannibalism as the only resource for getting rid of the superfluous poor, you'd begin to believe in it."

Fulkerson smiled in approval of the joke, and only said, "I wish you could meet the colonel in the privacy of the domestic circle, March. You'd like him. He's a splendid old fellow; regular type. Talk about spring! You ought to see the widow's little back yard these days. You know that glass gallery just beyond the dining-room? Those girls have got the pot-plants out of that, and a lot more, and they've turned the edges of that back yard, along the fence, into a regular bower; they've got sweet peas planted, and nasturtiums, and we shall be in a blaze of glory about the beginning of June."

Fun to see 'em work in the garden, and the bird bossing the job in his cage under the cherry-tree. Have to keep the middle of the yard for the clothes-line, but six days in the week it's a lawn, and I go over it with a mower myself. March, there ain't anything like a home, is there? Dear little cot of your own, heigh? I tell you, March, when I get to pushing that mower round, and the colonel is smoking his cigar in the gallery, and those girls are pottering over the flowers, one of these soft evenings after dinner, I feel like a human being. Yes, I do. I struck it rich when I concluded to take my meals at the widow's. For eight dollars a week I get good board, refined society, and all the advantages of a Christian home. By the way, you've never had much talk with Miss Woodburn, have you, March?"

"Not so much as with Miss Woodburn's father."

"Well, he is rather apt to scoop the conversation. I must draw his fire, sometime, when you and Mrs. March are around, and get you a chance with Miss Woodburn."

"I should like that better, I believe," said March.

"Well, I shouldn't wonder if you did. Curious, but Miss Woodburn isn't at all your idea of a Southern girl. She's got lots of go; she's never idle a minute; she keeps the old gentleman in first-class shape, and she don't believe a bit in the slavery solution of the labour problem; says she's glad it's gone, and if it's anything like the effects of it, she's glad it went before her time. No, sir, she's as full of snap as the liveliest kind of a Northern girl.

None of that sunny Southern languor you read about."

"I suppose the typical Southerner, like the typical anything else, is pretty difficult to find," said March. "But perhaps Miss Woodburn represents the new South. The modern conditions must be producing a modern type."

"Well, that's what she and the colonel both say. They say there ain't anything left of that Walter Scott dignity and chivalry in the rising generation; takes too much time. You ought to see her sketch the old-school, high-and-mighty manners, as they survive among some of the antiques in Charlottesburg. If that thing could be put upon the stage it would be a killing success. Makes the old gentleman laugh in spite of himself. But he's as proud of her as Punch, anyway. Why don't you and Mrs. March come round oftener? Look here! How would it do to have a little excursion, somewhere, after the spring fairly gets in its work?"

"Reporters present?"

"No, no! Nothing of that kind; perfectly sincere and disinterested enjoyment."

"Oh, a few handbills to be scattered around: 'Buy *Every Other Week*,' 'Look out for the next number of *Every Other Week*,' 'Every Other Week at all the news-stands.' Well, I'll talk it over with Mrs. March. I suppose there's no great hurry."

March told his wife of the idyllic mood in which he had left Fulkerson at the widow's door, and she said he must be in love.

"Why, of course! I wonder I didn't think of that. But Fulkerson is such an impartial admirer of the whole sex that you can't think of his liking one more than another. I don't know that he showed any unjust partiality, though, in his talk of 'those girls,' as he called them. And I always rather fancied that Mrs. Mandel—he's done so much for her, you know; and she is such a well-balanced, well-preserved person, and so lady-like and correct——"

"Fulkerson had the word for her: academic. She's everything that instruction and discipline can make of a woman; but I shouldn't think they could make enough of her to be in love with."

"Well, I don't know. The academic has its charm. There are moods in which I could imagine myself in love with an academic person. That regularity of line; that reasoned strictness of contour; that neatness of pose; that slightly conventional but harmonious grouping of the emotions and morals—you can see how it would have its charm, the Wedgwood in human nature? I wonder where Mrs. Mandel keeps her urn and her willow."

"I should think she might have use for them in that family, poor thing!" said Mrs. March.

"Ah, that reminds me," said her husband, "that we had another talk with the old gentleman, this afternoon, about Fulkerson's literary, artistic, and advertising orgie, and it's postponed till October."

"The later the better, I should think," said Mrs. March, who did not really think about it at all, but whom the date fixed for it caused to think of the

intervening time. "We have got to consider what we will do about the summer, before long, Basil."

"Oh, not yet, not yet," he pleaded, with that man's willingness to abide in the present, which is so trying to a woman. "It's only the end of April."

"It will be the end of June before we know. And these people wanting the Boston house another year complicates it. We can't spend the summer there, as we planned."

"They oughtn't to have offered us an increased rent; they have taken an advantage of us."

"I don't know that it matters," said Mrs. March. "I had decided not to go there."

"Had you? This is a surprise."

"Everything is a surprise to you, Basil, when it happens."

"True; I keep the world fresh, that way."

"It wouldn't have been any change to go from one city to another for the summer. We might as well have stayed in New York."

"Yes, I wish we had stayed," said March, idly humouring a conception of the accomplished fact. "Mrs. Green would have let us have the gim-crackery very cheap for the summer months; and we could have made all sorts of nice little excursions and trips off, and been twice as well as if we had spent the summer away."

"Nonsense! You know we couldn't spend the summer in New York."

"I know *I* could."

"What stuff! You couldn't manage."

"Oh yes, I could. I could take my meals at Fulkerson's widow's; or at Maroni's, with poor old Lindau: he's got to dining there again. Or, I could keep house, and he could dine with me here."

There was a teasing look in March's eyes, and he broke into a laugh, at the firmness with which his wife said, "I think if there is to be any house-keeping, I will stay, too; and help to look after it. I would try not intrude upon you and your guest."

"Oh, we should be only too glad to have you join us," said March, playing with fire.

"Very well, then, I wish you would take him off to Maroni's, the next time he comes to dine here!" cried his wife.

The experiment of making March's old friend free of his house had not given her all the pleasure that so kind a thing ought to have afforded so good a woman. She received Lindau at first with robust benevolence, and the high resolve not to let any of his little peculiarities alienate her from a sense of his claim upon her sympathy and gratitude, not only as a man who had been so generously fond of her husband in his youth, but a hero who had suffered for her country. Her theory was that his mutilation must not be ignored, but must be kept in mind as a monument of his sacrifice, and she fortified Bella with this conception, so that the child bravely sat next his maimed arm at table and helped him to dishes he could not reach, and cut up his meat for him. As for Mrs. March herself, the thought of his mutilation made her a little faint; she was not

without a bewildered resentment of its presence as a sort of oppression. She did not like his drinking so much of March's beer, either; it was no harm, but it was somehow unworthy, out of character with a hero of the war. But what she really could not reconcile herself to was the violence of Lindau's sentiments concerning the whole political and social fabric. She did not feel sure that he should be allowed to say such things before the children, who had been nurtured in the faith of Bunker Hill and Appomattox, as the beginning and the end of all possible progress in human rights. As a woman she was naturally an aristocrat, but as an American she was theoretically a democrat; and it astounded, it alarmed her, to hear American democracy denounced as a shuffling evasion. She had never cared much for the United States Senate, but she doubted if she ought to sit by when it was railed at as a rich man's club. It shocked her to be told that the rich and poor were not equal before the law in a country where justice must be paid for at every step in fees and costs, or where a poor man must go to war in his own person, and a rich man might hire some one to go in his. Mrs. March felt that this rebellious mind in Lindau really somehow outlawed him from sympathy, and retroactively undid his past suffering for the country: she had always particularly valued that provision of the law, because in forecasting all the possible mischances that might befall her own son, she had been comforted by the thought that if there ever was another war, and Tom

were drafted, his father could buy him a substitute. Compared with such blasphemy as this, Lindau's declaration that there was not equality of opportunity in America, and that fully one-half the people were debarred their right to the pursuit of happiness by the hopeless conditions of their lives, was flattering praise. She could not listen to such things in silence, though, and it did not help matters when Lindau met her arguments with facts and reasons which she felt she was merely not sufficiently instructed to combat, and he was not quite gentlemanly to urge. "I am afraid for the effect on the children," she said to her husband. "Such perfectly distorted ideas—Tom will be ruined by them."

"Oh, let Tom find out where they're false," said March. "It will be good exercise for his faculties of research. At any rate, those things are getting said nowadays; he'll have to hear them sooner or later."

"Had he better hear them at home?" demanded his wife.

"Why, you know, as you're here to refute them, Isabel," he teased, "perhaps it's the best place. But don't mind poor old Lindau, my dear. He says himself that his parg is worse than his pidte, you know."

"Ah, it's too late now to mind him," she sighed. In a moment of rash good feeling, or perhaps an exalted conception of duty, she had herself proposed that Lindau should come every week and read German with Tom; and it had become a question first how they could get him to take pay for it, and

then how they could get him to stop it. Mrs. March never ceased to wonder at herself for having brought this about, for she had warned her husband against making any engagement with Lindau which would bring him regularly to the house: the Germans stuck so, and were so unscrupulously dependent. Yet, the deed being done, she would not ignore the duty of hospitality, and it was always she who made the old man stay to their Sunday evening tea when he lingered near the hour, reading Schiller and Heine and Uhland with the boy, in the clean shirt with which he observed the day; Lindau's linen was not to be trusted during the week. She now concluded a season of mournful reflection by saying, "He will get you into trouble, somehow, Basil."

"Well, I don't know how, exactly. I regard Lindau as a political economist of an unusual type; but I shall not let him array me against the constituted authorities. Short of that, I think I am safe."

"Well, be careful, Basil; be careful. You know you are so rash."

"I suppose I may continue to pity him? He is such a poor, lonely old fellow. Are you really sorry he's come into our lives, my dear?"

"No, no; not that. I feel as you do about it; but I wish I felt easier about him—sure, that is, that we're not doing wrong to let him keep on talking so."

"I suspect we couldn't help it," March returned lightly. "It's one of what Lindau calls his 'brincibles' to say what he thinks."

II.

THE Marches had no longer the gross appetite for novelty which urges youth to a surfeit of strange scenes, experiences, ideas; and makes travel, with all its annoyances and fatigues, an inexhaustible delight. But there is no doubt that the chief pleasure of their life in New York was from its quality of foreignness: the flavour of olives, which, once tasted, can never be forgotten. The olives may not be of the first excellence; they may be a little stale, and small and poor, to begin with, but they are still olives, and the fond palate craves them. The sort which grew in New York, on lower Sixth Avenue and in the region of Jefferson Market and on the soft exposures south of Washington Square, were none the less acceptable because they were of the commonest Italian variety.

The Marches spent a good deal of time and money in a grocery of that nationality, where they found all the patriotic comestibles and potables, and renewed their faded Italian with the friendly family in charge. Italian *table-d'hôtes* formed the adventure of the week, on the day when Mrs. March let her domestics go out, and went herself to dine abroad

with her husband and children; and they became adept in the restaurants where they were served, and which they varied almost from dinner to dinner. The perfect decorum of these places, and their immunity from offence in any, emboldened the Marches to experiment in Spanish restaurants, where red pepper and beans insisted in every dinner, and where once they chanced upon a night of *olla podrida*, with such appeals to March's memory of a boyish ambition to taste the dish that he became poetic and then pensive over its cabbage and carrots, peas and bacon. For a rare combination of international motives they prized most the *table-d'hôte* of a French lady, who had taken a Spanish husband in a second marriage, and had a Cuban negro for her cook, with a cross-eyed Alsatian for waiter, and a slim young South American for cashier. March held that something of the catholic character of these relations expressed itself in the generous and tolerant variety of the dinner, which was singularly abundant for fifty cents, without wine. At one very neat French place he got a dinner at the same price with wine, but it was not so abundant; and March inquired in fruitless speculation why the *table-d'hôte* of the Italians, a notoriously frugal and abstemious people, should be usually more than you wanted at seventy-five cents and a dollar, and that of the French rather less for half a dollar. He could not see that the frequenters were greatly different at the different places; they were mostly Americans, of subdued manners and conjecturably subdued fortunes, with

here and there a table full of foreigners. There was no noise and not much smoking anywhere ; March liked going to that neat French place because there Madame sat enthroned and high behind a *comptoir* at one side of the room, and everybody saluted her in going out. It was there that a gentle-looking young couple used to dine, in whom the Marches became effectlessly interested, because they thought they looked like that when they were young. The wife had an æsthetic dress, and defined her pretty head by wearing her back-hair pulled up very tight under her bonnet ; the husband had dreamy eyes set wide apart under a pure forehead. "They are artists, August, I think," March suggested to the waiter, when he had vainly asked about them. "Oh, hartis, cedenly," August consented ; but Heaven knows whether they were, or what they were : March never learned.

This immunity from acquaintance, this touch-and-go quality in their New York sojourn, this almost loss of individuality at times, after the intense identification of their Boston life, was a relief, though Mrs. March had her misgivings, and questioned whether it were not perhaps too relaxing to the moral fibre. March refused to explore his conscience ; he allowed that it might be so ; but he said he liked now and then to feel his personality in that state of solution. They went and sat a good deal in the softening evenings among the infants and dotards of Latin extraction in Washington Square, safe from all who ever knew them, and

enjoyed the advancing season, which thickened the foliage of the trees and flattered out of sight the churchwarden's gothic of the University Building. The infants were sometimes cross, and cried in their weary mothers' or little sisters' arms; but they did not disturb the dotards, who slept, some with their heads fallen forward, and some with their heads fallen back; March arbitrarily distinguished those with the drooping faces as tipsy and ashamed to confront the public. The small Italian children raced up and down the asphalté paths, playing American games of tag and hide-and-whoop; larger boys passed ball, in training for potential championships. The Marches sat and mused, or quarrelled fitfully about where they should spend the summer, like sparrows, he once said, till the electric lights began to show distinctly among the leaves, and they looked round and found the infants and dotards gone and the benches filled with lovers. That was the signal for the Marches to go home. He said that the spectacle of so much courtship as the eye might take in there at a glance was not, perhaps, oppressive, but the thought that at the same hour the same thing was going on all over the country, wherever two young fools could get together, was more than he could bear; he did not deny that it was natural, and, in a measure, authorised, but he declared that it was hackneyed; and the fact that it must go on for ever, as long as the race lasted, made him tired.

At home, generally, they found that the children had not missed them, and were perfectly safe. It

was one of the advantages of a flat that they could leave the children there whenever they liked without anxiety. They liked better staying there than wandering about in the evening with their parents, whose excursions seemed to them somewhat aimless, and their pleasures insipid. They studied, or read, or looked out of the window at the street sights; and their mother always came back to them with a pang for their lonesomeness. Bella knew some little girls in the house, but in a ceremonious way; Tom had formed no friendships among the boys at school such as he had left in Boston; as nearly as he could explain, the New York fellows carried canes at an age when they would have had them broken for them by the other boys at Boston; and they were both sissyish and fast. It was probably prejudice; he never could say exactly what their demerits were, and neither he nor Bella was apparently so homesick as they pretended, though they answered inquirers, the one that New York was a hole, and the other that it was horrid, and that all they lived for was to get back to Boston. In the meantime they were thrown much upon each other for society, which March said was well for both of them; he did not mind their cultivating a little gloom and the sense of a common wrong; it made them better comrades, and it was providing them with amusing reminiscences for the future. They really enjoyed Bohemianising in that harmless way: though Tom had his doubts of its respectability; he was very punctilious about his sister, and went round

from his own school every day to fetch her home from hers. The whole family went to the theatre a good deal, and enjoyed themselves together in their desultory explorations of the city.

They lived near Greenwich Village, and March liked strolling through its quaintness toward the water-side on a Sunday, when a hereditary Sabbatarianism kept his wife at home ; he made her observe that it even kept her at home from church. He found a lingering quality of pure Americanism in the region, and he said the very bells called to worship in a nasal tone. He liked the streets of small brick houses, with here and there one painted red, and the mortar lines picked out in white, and with now and then a fine wooden portal of fluted pillars and a bowed transom. The rear of the tenement-houses showed him the picturesqueness of clothes-lines fluttering far aloft, as in Florence ; and the new apartment-houses, breaking the old sky-line with their towering stories, implied a life as alien to the American manner as anything in continental Europe. In fact, foreign faces and foreign tongues prevailed in Greenwich Village, but no longer German or even Irish tongues or faces. The eyes and ear-rings of Italians twinkled in and out of the alleyways and basements, and they seemed to abound even in the streets, where long ranks of trucks drawn up in Sunday rest along the curb-stones suggested the presence of a race of sturdier strength than theirs. March liked the swarthy, strange visages ; he found nothing menacing for

the future in them ; for wickedness he had to satisfy himself as he could with the sneering, insolent, clean-shaven mug of some rare American of the b'hoy type, now almost as extinct in New York as the dodo or the volunteer fireman. When he had found his way, among the ash-barrels and the groups of decently dressed church-goers, to the docks, he experienced a sufficient excitement in the recent arrival of a French steamer, whose sheds were thronged with hacks and express-wagons, and in a tacit inquiry into the emotions of the passengers, fresh from the cleanliness of Paris, and now driving up through the filth of those streets.

Some of the streets were filthier than others ; there was at least a choice ; there were boxes and barrels of kitchen offal on all the sidewalks, but not everywhere manure-heaps, and in some places the stench was mixed with the more savoury smell of cooking. One Sunday morning, before the winter was quite gone, the sight of the frozen refuse melting in heaps, and particularly the loathsome edges of the rotting ice near the gutters, with the strata of waste-paper and straw litter, and egg-shells and orange-peel, potato-skins and cigar-stumps, made him unhappy. He gave a whimsical shrug for the squalor of the neighbouring houses, and said to himself rather than the boy who was with him : "It's curious, isn't it, how fond the poor people are of these unpleasant thoroughfares ? You always find them living in the worst streets."

"The burden of all the wrong in the world comes

on the poor," said the boy. "Every sort of fraud and swindling hurts them the worst. The city wastes the money it's paid to clean the streets with, and the poor have to suffer, for they can't afford to pay twice, like the rich."

March stopped short. "Hallo, Tom! Is that *your* wisdom?"

"It's what Mr. Lindau says," answered the boy doggedly, as if not pleased to have his ideas mocked at, even if they were second-hand.

"And you didn't tell him that the poor lived in dirty streets because they liked them, and were too lazy and worthless to have them cleaned?"

"No; I didn't."

"I'm surprised. What do you think of Lindau, generally speaking, Tom?"

"Well, sir, I don't like the way he talks about some things. I don't suppose this country is perfect, but I think it's about the best there is, and it don't do any good to look at its drawbacks all the time."

"Sound, my son," said March, putting his hand on the boy's shoulder and beginning to walk on. "Well?"

"Well, then, he says that it isn't the public frauds only that the poor have to pay for, but they have to pay for all the vices of the rich; that when a speculator fails, or a bank cashier defaults, or a firm suspends, or hard times come, it's the poor who have to give up necessities where the rich give up luxuries."

"Well, well! And then?"

"Well, then I think the crank comes in, in Mr. Lindau. He says there's no need of failures or frauds or hard times. It's ridiculous. There always have been and there always will be. But if you tell him that, it seems to make him perfectly furious."

March repeated the substance of this talk to his wife. "I'm glad to know that Tom can see through such ravings. He has lots of good common-sense."

It was the afternoon of the same Sunday, and they were sauntering up Fifth Avenue, and admiring the wide old double houses at the lower end; at one corner they got a distinct pleasure out of the gnarled elbows that a pollarded wistaria leaned upon the top of a garden wall—for its convenience in looking into the street, he said. The line of these comfortable dwellings, once so fashionable, was continually broken by the façades of shops; and March professed himself vulgarised by a want of style in the people they met in their walk to Twenty-third Street.

"Take me somewhere to meet my fellow-exclusives, Isabel," he demanded. "I pine for the society of my peers."

He hailed a passing omnibus, and made his wife get on the roof with him. "Think of our doing such a thing in Boston!" she sighed, with a little shiver of satisfaction in her immunity from recognition and comment.

"You wouldn't be afraid to do it in London or Paris?"

"No; we should be strangers there—just as we are in New York. I wonder how long one could be a stranger here."

"Oh, indefinitely, in our way of living. The place is really vast, so much larger than it used to seem, and so heterogeneous."

When they got down very far uptown, and began to walk back by Madison Avenue, they found themselves in a different population from that they dwelt among; not heterogeneous at all; very homogeneous, and almost purely American; the only qualification was American Hebrew. Such a well-dressed, well-satisfied, well-fed looking crowd poured down the broad sidewalks before the handsome, stupid houses that March could easily pretend he had got among his fellow-plutocrats at last. Still he expressed his doubts whether this Sunday afternoon parade, which seemed to be a thing of custom, represented the best form among the young people of that region; he wished he knew; he blamed himself for becoming of a fastidious conjecture; he could not deny the fashion and the richness and the indigeneity of the spectacle; the promenaders looked New Yorky; they were the sort of people whom you would know for New Yorkers elsewhere, so well equipped and so perfectly kept at all points. Their silk hats shone, and their boots; their frocks had the right distension behind, and their bonnets perfect poise and distinction.

The Marches talked of these and other facts of their appearance, and curiously questioned whether

this were the best that a great material civilisation could come to ; it looked a little dull. The men's faces were shrewd and alert, and yet they looked dull ; the women's were pretty and knowing, and yet dull. It was, probably, the holiday expression of the vast, prosperous commercial class, with unlimited money, and no ideals that money could not realise ; fashion and comfort were all that they desired to compass, and the culture that furnishes showily, that decorates and that tells ; the culture, say, of plays and operas, rather than books.

Perhaps the observers did the promenaders injustice ; they might not have been as common-minded as they looked. "But," March said, "I understand now why the poor people don't come up here and live in this clean, handsome, respectable quarter of the town ; they would be bored to death. On the whole, I think I should prefer Mott Street myself."

In other walks the Marches tried to find some of the streets they had wandered through the first day of their wedding journey in New York, so long ago. They could not make sure of them ; but once they ran down to the Battery, and easily made sure of that, though not in its old aspect. They recalled the hot morning, when they sauntered over the trodden weed that covered the sickly grass-plots there, and sentimentalised the sweltering paupers who had crept out of the squalid tenements about for a breath of air after a sleepless night. Now the paupers were gone, and where the old mansions

that had fallen to their use once stood, there towered aloft and abroad those heights and masses of many-storied brick-work for which architecture has yet no proper form and æsthetics no name. The trees and shrubs, all in their young spring green, blew briskly over the guarded turf in the south wind that came up over the water ; and in the well-paved alleys the ghosts of eighteenth-century fashion might have met each other in their old haunts, and exchanged stately congratulations upon its vastly bettered condition, and perhaps puzzled a little over the colossal lady on Bedloe's Island, with her lifted torch, and still more over the curving tracks and chalet-stations of the Elevated road. It is an outlook of unrivalled beauty across the bay, that smokes and flashes with the innumerable stacks and sails of commerce, to the hills beyond, where the moving forest of masts halts at the shore, and roots itself in the groves of the many-villaged uplands. The Marches paid the charming prospect a willing duty, and rejoiced in it as generously as if it had been their own. Perhaps it was, they decided. He said people owned more things in common than they were apt to think ; and they drew the consolations of proprietorship from the excellent management of Castle Garden, which they penetrated for a moment's glimpse of the huge rotunda, where the emigrants first set foot on our continent. It warmed their hearts, so easily moved to any cheap sympathy, to see the friendly care the nation took of these humble guests ; they found it even pathetic to hear the proper authority calling

out the names of such as had kin or acquaintance waiting there to meet them. No one appeared troubled or anxious; the officials had a conscientious civility; the government seemed to manage their welcome as well as a private company or corporation could have done. In fact, it was after the simple strangers had left the government care that March feared their woes might begin; and he would have liked the government to follow each of them to his home, wherever he meant to fix it within our borders. He made note of the looks of the licensed runners and touters waiting for the immigrants outside the government premises; he intended to work them up into a dramatic effect in some sketch, but they remained mere material in his memorandum-book, together with some quaint old houses on the Sixth Avenue road, which he had noticed on the way down. On the way up, these were superseded in his regard by some hip-roof structures on the Ninth Avenue, which he thought more Dutch-looking. The perspectives of the cross-streets toward the river were very lively, with their turmoil of trucks and cars and carts and hacks and foot-passengers, ending in the chimneys and masts of shipping, and final gleams of dancing water. At a very noisy corner, clangorous with some sort of iron-working, he made his wife enjoy with him the quiet sarcasm of an inn that called itself the Homelike Hotel, and he speculated at fantastic length on the gentle associations of one who should have passed his youth under its roof.

III.

FIRST and last, the Marches did a good deal of travel on the Elevated roads, which, he said, gave you such glimpses of material aspects in the city as some violent invasion of others' lives might afford in human nature. Once, when the impulse of adventure was very strong in them, they went quite the length of the West side lines, and saw the city pushing its way by irregular advances into the country. Some spaces, probably held by the owners for that rise in value which the industry of others providentially gives to the land of the wise and good, it left vacant comparatively far down the road, and built up others at remoter points. It was a world of lofty apartment-houses beyond the Park, springing up in isolated blocks, with stretches of invaded rusticity between, and here and there an old country-seat standing dusty in its budding vines with the ground before it in rocky upheaval for city foundations. But wherever it went or wherever it paused, New York gave its peculiar stamp; and the adventurers were amused to find One Hundred and Twenty-fifth Street inchoately like Twenty-third Street and Fourteenth Street in its shops and

shoppers. The butchers' shops and milliners' shops on the avenue might as well have been at Tenth as at One Hundredth Street.

The adventurers were not often so adventurous. They recognised that in their willingness to let their fancy range for them, and to let speculation do the work of inquiry, they were no longer young. Their point of view was singularly unchanged, and their impressions of New York remained the same that they had been fifteen years before : huge, noisy, ugly, kindly, it seemed to them now as it seemed then. The main difference was that they saw it more now as a life, and then they only regarded it as a spectacle ; and March could not release himself from a sense of complicity with it, no matter what whimsical, or alien, or critical attitude he took. A sense of the striving and the suffering deeply possessed him ; and this grew the more intense as he gained some knowledge of the forces at work—forces of pity, of destruction, of perdition, of salvation. He wandered about on Sunday not only through the streets, but into this tabernacle and that, as the spirit moved him, and listened to those who dealt with Christianity as a system of economics as well as a religion. He could not get his wife to go with him ; she listened to his report of what he heard, and trembled ; it all seemed fantastic and menacing. She lamented the literary peace, the intellectual refinement of the life they had left behind them ; and he owned it was very pretty, but he said it was not life—it was death-in-life. She

liked to hear him talk in that strain of virtuous self-denunciation, but she asked him, "Which of your prophets are you going to follow?" and he answered, "All—all! And a fresh one every Sunday." And so they got their laugh out of it at last, but with some sadness at heart, and with a dim consciousness that they had got their laugh out of too many things in life.

What really occupied and compassed his activities, in spite of his strenuous reveries of work beyond it, was his editorship. On its social side it had not fulfilled all the expectations which Fulkerson's radiant sketch of its duties and relations had caused him to form of it. Most of the contributions came from a distance; even the articles written in New York reached him through the post, and so far from having his valuable time, as they called it, consumed in interviews with his collaborators, he rarely saw any of them. The boy on the stairs, who was to fence him from importunate visitors, led a life of luxurious disoccupation, and whistled almost uninterruptedly. When any one came, March found himself embarrassed and a little anxious. The visitors were usually young men, terribly respectful, but cherishing, as he imagined, ideals and opinions chasmally different from his; and he felt in their presence something like an anachronism, something like a fraud. He tried to freshen up his sympathies on them, to get at what they were really thinking and feeling, and it was some time before he could understand that they were not really thinking and feeling

anything of their own concerning their art, but were necessarily, in their quality of young, inexperienced men, mere acceptants of older men's thoughts and feelings, whether they were tremendously conservative, as some were, or tremendously progressive, as others were. Certain of them called themselves realists, certain romanticists; but none of them seemed to know what realism was, or what romanticism; they apparently supposed the difference a difference of material. March had imagined himself taking home to lunch or dinner the aspirants for editorial favour whom he liked, whether he liked their work or not; but this was not an easy matter. Those who were at all interesting seemed to have engagements and preoccupations; after two or three experiments with the bashfuller sort—those who had come up to the metropolis with manuscripts in their hands, in the good old literary tradition—he wondered whether he was otherwise like them when he was young like them. He could not flatter himself that he was not; and yet he had a hope that the world had grown worse since his time, which his wife encouraged.

Mrs. March was not eager to pursue the hospitalities which she had at first imagined essential to the literary prosperity of *Every Other Week*; her family sufficed her; she would willingly have seen no one out of it but the strangers at the weekly *table-d'hôte* dinner, or the audiences at the theatres. March's devotion to his work made him reluctant to delegate it to any one; and as the summer advanced, and

the question of where to go grew more vexed, he showed a man's base willingness to shirk it for himself by not going anywhere. He asked his wife why she did not go somewhere with the children, and he joined her in a search for non-malarial regions on the map when she consented to entertain this notion. But when it came to the point she would not go; he offered to go with her then, and then she would not let him. She said she knew he would be anxious about his work; he protested that he could take it with him to any distance within a few hours, but she would not be persuaded. She would rather he stayed; the effect would be better with Mr. Fulkerson; they could make excursions, and they could all get off a week or two to the sea-shore near Boston—the only real sea-shore—in August. The excursions were practically confined to a single day at Coney Island; and once they got as far as Boston on the way to the sea-shore near Boston; that is, Mrs. March and the children went; an editorial exigency kept March at the last moment. The Boston streets seemed very queer and clean and empty to the children, and the buildings little; in the horse-cars the Boston faces seemed to arraign their mother with a down-drawn severity that made her feel very guilty. She knew that this was merely the Puritan mask, the east of a dead civilisation, which people of very amiable and tolerant minds were doomed to wear, and she sighed to think that less than a year of the heterogeneous gaiety of New York should have made her afraid of it. The sky

seemed cold and grey; the east wind, which she had always thought so delicious in summer, cut her to the heart. She took her children up to the South End, and in the pretty square where they used to live they stood before their alienated home, and looked up at its close-shuttered windows. The tenants must have been away, but Mrs. March had not the courage to ring and make sure, though she had always promised herself that she would go all over the house when she came back, and see how they had used it; she could pretend a desire for something she wished to take away. She knew she could not bear it now; and the children did not seem eager. She did not push on to the seaside; it would be forlorn there without their father; she was glad to go back to him in the immense, friendly homelessness of New York, and hold him answerable for the change, in her heart or her mind, which made its shapeless tumult a refuge and a consolation.

She found that he had been giving the cook a holiday, and dining about hither and thither with Fulkerson. Once he had dined with him at the widow's (as they always called Mrs. Leighton), and then had spent the evening there, and smoked with Fulkerson and Colonel Woodburn on the gallery overlooking the back yard. They were all spending the summer in New York. The widow had got so good an offer for her house at St. Barnaby for the summer that she could not refuse it; and the Woodburns found New York a watering-place of

exemplary coolness after the burning Augusts and Septembers of Charlottesburg.

"You can stand it well enough in our climate, sir," the colonel explained, "till you come to the September heat, that sometimes runs well into October; and then you begin to lose your temper, sir. It's never quite so hot as it is in New York at times, but it's hot longer, sir." He alleged, as if something of the sort were necessary, the example of a famous South-western editor who spent all his summers in a New York hotel as the most luxurious retreat on the continent, consulting the weather forecasts, and running off on torrid days to the mountains or the sea, and then hurrying back at the promise of cooler weather. The colonel had not found it necessary to do this yet; and he had been reluctant to leave town, where he was working up a branch of the inquiry which had so long occupied him, in the libraries, and studying the great problem of labour and poverty as it continually presented itself to him in the streets. He said that he talked with all sorts of people, whom he found monstrously civil, if you took them in the right way; and he went everywhere in the city without fear and apparently without danger. March could not find out that he had ridden his hobby into the homes of want which he visited, or had proposed their enslavement to the inmates as a short and simple solution of the great question of their lives; he appeared to have contented himself with the collection of facts for the persuasion of the cultivated classes. It

seemed to March a confirmation of this impression that the colonel should address his deductions from these facts so unsparingly to him ; he listened with a respectful patience, for which Fulkerson afterward personally thanked him. Fulkerson said it was not often the colonel found such a good listener ; generally nobody listened but Mrs. Leighton, who thought his ideas were shocking, but honoured him for holding them so conscientiously. Fulkerson was glad that March, as the literary department, had treated the old gentleman so well, because there was an open feud between him and the art department. Beaton was outrageously rude, Fulkerson must say ; though as for that, the old colonel seemed quite able to take care of himself, and gave Beaton an unqualified contempt in return for his unmannerliness. The worst of it was, it distressed the old lady so ; she admired Beaton as much as she respected the colonel, and she admired Beaton, Fulkerson thought, rather more than Miss Leighton did ; he asked March if he had noticed them together. March had noticed them, but without any very definite impression except that Beaton seemed to give the whole evening to the girl. Afterward he recollected that he had fancied her rather harassed by his devotion, and it was this point that he wished to present for his wife's opinion.

"Girls often put on that air, she said. "It's one of their ways of teasing. But then, if the man was really very much in love, and she was only enough in love to be uncertain of herself, she might very well

seem troubled. It would be a very serious question. Girls often don't know what to do in such a case."

"Yes," said March, "I've often been glad that I was not a girl, on that account. But I guess that on general principles Beaton is not more in love than she is. I couldn't imagine that young man being more in love with anybody, unless it was himself. He might be more in love with himself than any one else was."

"Well, he doesn't interest me a great deal, and I can't say Miss Leighton does either. I think she can take care of herself. She has herself very well in hand."

"Why so censorious?" pleaded March. "I don't defend her for having herself in hand; but is it a fault?"

Mrs. March did not say. She asked, "And how does Mr. Fulkerson's affair get on?"

"His affair? You really think it *is* one? Well, I've fancied so myself, and I've had an idea of some time asking him; Fulkerson strikes one as truly domesticable, conjugable at heart; but I've waited for him to speak."

"I should think so."

"Yes. He's never opened on the subject yet. Do you know, I think Fulkerson has his moments of delicacy."

"Moments! He's *all* delicacy in regard to women."

"Well, perhaps so. There is nothing in them to rouse his advertising instincts."

IV.

THE Dryfoos family stayed in town till August. Then the father went West again to look after his interests; and Mrs. Mandel took the two girls to one of the great hotels in Saratoga. Fulkerson said that he had never seen anything like Saratoga for fashion, and Mrs. Mandel remembered that in her own young ladyhood this was so for at least some weeks of the year. She had been too far withdrawn from fashion since her marriage to know whether it was still so or not. In this, as in so many other matters, the Dryfoos family helplessly relied upon Fulkerson, in spite of Dryfoos's angry determination that he should not run the family, and in spite of Christine's doubt of his omniscience; if he did not know everything, she was aware that he knew more than herself. She thought that they had a right to have him go with them to Saratoga, or at least go up and engage their rooms beforehand; but Fulkerson did not offer to do either, and she did not quite see her way to commanding his services. The young ladies took what Mela called splendid dresses with them; they sat in the park of tall, slim trees which the hotel's quadrangle enclosed, and listened

to the music in the morning, or on the long piazza in the afternoon and looked at the driving in the street, or in the vast parlours by night, where all the other ladies were, and they felt that they were of the best there. But they knew nobody, and Mrs. Mandel was so particular that Mela was prevented from continuing the acquaintance even of the few young men who danced with her at the Saturday-night hops. They drove about, but they went to places without knowing why, except that the carriage man took them, and they had all the privileges of a proud exclusivism without desiring them. Once a motherly matron seemed to perceive their isolation, and made overtures to them, but then desisted, as if repelled by Christine's suspicion, or by Mela's too instant and hilarious good-fellowship, which expressed itself in hoarse laughter and in a flow of talk full of topical and syntactical freedom. From time to time she offered to bet Christine that if Mr. Fulkerson was only there they would have a good time; she wondered what they were all doing in New York, where she wished herself; she rallied her sister about Beaton, and asked her why she did not write and tell him to come up there.

Mela knew that Christine had expected Beaton to follow them. Some banter had passed between them to this effect; he said he should take them in on his way home to Syracuse. Christine would not have hesitated to write to him and remind him of his promise; but she had learned to distrust her literature with Beaton since he had laughed at the

spelling in a scrap of writing which dropped out of her music-book one night. She believed that he would not have laughed if he had known it was hers; but she felt that she could hide better the deficiencies which were not committed to paper; she could manage with him in talking; she was too ignorant of her ignorance to recognise the mistakes she made then. Through her own passion she perceived that she had some kind of fascination for him; she was graceful, and she thought it must be that; she did not understand that there was a kind of beauty in her small, irregular features that piqued and haunted his artistic sense, and a look in her black eyes beyond her intelligence and intention. Once he sketched her as they sat together, and flattered the portrait without getting what he wanted in it; he said he must try her some time in colour; and he said things which, when she made Mela repeat them, could only mean that he admired her more than anybody else. He came fitfully, but he came often, and she rested content in a girl's indefiniteness concerning the affair; if her thought went beyond love-making to marriage, she believed that she could have him if she wanted him. Her father's money counted in this; she divined that Beaton was poor; but that made no difference; she would have enough for both; the money would have counted as an irresistible attraction if there had been no other.

The affair had gone on in spite of the sidelong looks of restless dislike with which Dryfoos regarded

it; but now when Beaton did not come to Saratoga it necessarily dropped, and Christine's content with it. She bore the trial as long as she could; she used pride and resentment against it; but at last she could not bear it, and with Mela's help she wrote a letter, bantering Beaton on his stay in New York, and playfully boasting of Saratoga. It seemed to them both that it was a very bright letter, and would be sure to bring him; they would have had no scruple about sending it but for the doubt they had whether they had got some of the words right. Mela offered to bet Christine anything she dared that they were right, and she said, Send it anyway; it was no difference if they *were* wrong. But Christine could not endure to think of that laugh of Beaton's, and there remained only Mrs. Mandel as authority on the spelling. Christine dreaded her authority on other points, but Mela said she knew she would not interfere, and she undertook to get round her. Mrs. Mandel pronounced the spelling bad, and the taste worse; she forbade them to send the letter; and Mela failed to get round her, though she threatened, if Mrs. Mandel would not tell her how to spell the wrong words, that she would send the letter as it was; then Mrs. Mandel said that if Mr. Beaton appeared in Saratoga she would instantly take them both home. When Mela reported this result, Christine accused her of having mismanaged the whole business; she quarrelled with her, and they called each other names. Christine declared

that she would not stay in Saratoga, and that if Mrs. Mandel did not go back to New York with her she should go alone. They returned the first week in September ; but by that time Beaton had gone to see his people in Syracuse.

Conrad Dryfoos remained at home with his mother after his father went West. He had already taken such a vacation as he had been willing to allow himself, and had spent it on a charity farm near the city, where the fathers with whom he worked among the poor on the East side in the winter had sent some of their wards for the summer. It was not possible to keep his recreation a secret at the office, and Fulkerson found a pleasure in figuring the jolly time Brother Conrad must have teaching farm work among those paupers and potential reprobates. He invented details of his experience among them, and March could not always help joining in the laugh at Conrad's humourless helplessness under Fulkerson's burlesque denunciation of a summer outing spent in such dissipation.

They had time for a great deal of joking at the office during the season of leisure which penetrates in August to the very heart of business, and they all got on terms of greater intimacy if not greater friendliness than before. Fulkerson had not had so long to do with the advertising side of human nature without developing a vein of cynicism, of no great depth, perhaps, but broad, and underlying his whole point of view ; he made light of Beaton's solemnity,

as he made light of Conrad's humanity. The art editor, with abundant sarcasm, had no more humour than the publisher, and was an easy prey in the manager's hands; but when he had been led on by Fulkerson's flatteries to make some betrayal of egotism, he brooded over it till he had thought how to revenge himself in elaborate insult. For Beaton's talent Fulkerson never lost his admiration; but his joke was to encourage him to give himself airs of being the sole source of the magazine's prosperity. No bait of this sort was too obvious for Beaton to swallow; he could be caught with it as often as Fulkerson chose; though he was ordinarily suspicious as to the motives of people in saying things. With March he got on no better than at first. He seemed to be lying in wait for some encroachment of the literary department on the art department, and he met it now and then with anticipative reprisal. After these rebuffs, the editor delivered him over to the manager, who could turn Beaton's contrary-mindedness to account by asking the reverse of what he really wanted done. This was what Fulkerson said; the fact was that he did get on with Beaton; and March contented himself with musing upon the contradictions of a character at once so vain and so offensive, so fickle and so sullen, so conscious and so simple.

After the first jarring contact with Dryfoos, the editor ceased to feel the disagreeable fact of the old man's mastery of the financial situation. None of the chances which might have made it painful

occurred ; the control of the whole affair remained in Fulkerson's hands ; before he went West again, Dryfoos had ceased to come about the office, as if, having once worn off the novelty of the sense of owning a literary periodical, he was no longer interested in it.

Yet it was a relief, somehow, when he left town, which he did not do without coming to take a formal leave of the editor at his office. He seemed willing to leave March with a better impression than he had hitherto troubled himself to make ; he even said some civil things about the magazine, as if its success pleased him ; and he spoke openly to March of his hope that his son would finally become interested in it to the exclusion of the hopes and purposes which divided them. It seemed to March that in the old man's warped and toughened heart he perceived a disappointed love for his son greater than for his other children ; but this might have been fancy. Lindau came in with some copy while Dryfoos was there, and March introduced them. When Lindau went out, March explained to Dryfoos that he had lost his hand in the war ; and he told him something of Lindau's career as he had known it. Dryfoos appeared greatly pleased that *Every Other Week* was giving Lindau work. He said that he had helped to enlist a good many fellows for the war, and had paid money to fill up the Moffitt County quota under the later calls for troops. He had never been an Abolitionist, but he had joined the Anti-Nebraska party in '55, and he had voted

for Fremont and for every Republican President since then.

At his own house March saw more of Lindau than of any other contributor, but the old man seemed to think that he must transact all his business with March at his place of business. The transaction had some peculiarities which perhaps made this necessary. Lindau always expected to receive his money when he brought his copy, as an acknowledgment of the immediate right of the labourer to his hire ; and he would not take it in a cheque because he did not approve of banks, and regarded the whole system of banking as the capitalistic manipulation of the people's money. He would receive his pay only from March's hand, because he wished to be understood as working for him, and honestly earning money honestly earned ; and sometimes March inwardly winced a little at letting the old man share the increase of capital won by such speculation as Dryfoos's, but he shook off the feeling. As the summer advanced, and the artists and classes that employed Lindau as a model left town one after another, he gave largely of his increasing leisure to the people in the office of *Every Other Week*. It was pleasant for March to see the respect with which Conrad Dryfoos always used him, for the sake of his wound and his grey beard. There was something delicate and fine in it, and there was nothing unkindly on Fulkerson's part in the hostilities which usually passed between him and Lindau. Fulkerson bore himself reverently at

times too, but it was not in him to keep that up, especially when Lindau appeared with more beer aboard than, as Fulkerson said, he could manage ship-shape. On these occasions Fulkerson always tried to start him on the theme of the unduly rich ; he made himself the champion of monopolies, and enjoyed the invectives which Lindau heaped upon him as a slave of capital ; he said that it did him good.

One day, with the usual show of writhing under Lindau's scorn, he said, "Well, I understand that although you despise me now, Lindau——"

"I ton't desbise you," the old man broke in, his nostrils swelling and his eyes flaming with excitement, "I bity you."

"Well, it seems to come to the same thing in the end," said Fulkerson. "What I understand is that you pity me now as the slave of capital, but you would pity me a great deal more if I was the master of it."

"How you mean?"

"If I was rich."

"That would tebendt," said Lindau, trying to control himself. "If you hat inheritedt your money, you might pe innocent ; but if you hat *mate* it, efery man that resbectedt himself would haf to ask *how* you mate it, and if you hat mate moch, he would know——"

"Hold on ; hold on, now, Lindau ! Ain't that rather un-American doctrine ? We're all brought up, ain't we, to honour the man that made his

money, and look down—or try to look down ; sometimes it's difficult—on the fellow that his father left it to ? ”

The old man rose and struck his breast. “ On-Amerigan ! ” he roared, and, as he went on, his accent grew more and more uncertain. “ What iss Amerigan ? Dere iss no Ameriga any more ! You start here free and brafе, and you glaim for efery man de righdt to life, liperty, and de bursuit of habbiness. And where haf you entedt ? No man that vorks with his handts among you hass the liperty to bursue his habbiness. He iss the slafe of some richer man, some gompany, some gorporation, dat erindts him down to the least he can lif on, and that rops him of the marchin of his earnings that he might pe habby on. Oh, you Amerigans, you haf cot it down goldt, as you say ! You ton't puy foters ; you puy lechislatures and goncressmen ; you puy gourts ; you puy gombetitors ; you pay infentors not to infent ; you *atfertise*, and the gounting-room sees dat de etitorial-room toesn't tink.”

“ Yes, we've got a little arrangement of that sort with March here,” said Fulkerson.

“ Oh, I am sawry,” said the old man contritely, “ I meant noting bersonal. I ton't tink we are all cuilty or gorrubt, and efen among the rich there are goodt men. But gabidal”—his passion rose again—“ where you find gabidal, millions of money that a man hass cot togeder in fife, ten, twenty years, you findt the smell of tears and ploodt ! Dat iss what I say. And you cot to loog oudt for yourself when

you meet a rich man whether you meet an honest man."

"Well," said Fulkerson, "I wish I was a subject of suspicion with you, Lindau. By the way," he added, "I understand that you think capital was at the bottom of the veto of that pension of yours."

"What bension? What fetto?" The old man flamed up again. "No bension of mine was efer fettoed. I renounce my bension, because I would sgorn to dake money from a goferment that I ton't peliefe in any more. Where you hear that story?"

"Well, I don't know," said Fulkerson, rather embarrassed. "It's common talk."

"It's a gommen lie, then! When the time gome dat dis iss a free gountry again, then I dake a bension again for my woundts; but I would *sdarfe* before I dake a bension now from a rebublic dat is bought oap by monobolies, and ron by drusts and gompanies, and railroadts andt oil gompanies.

"Look out, Lindau," said Fulkerson. "You bite yourself mit dat dog some day." But when the old man, with a ferocious gesture of renunciation, whirled out of the place, he added: "I guess I went a little too far that time. I touched him on a sore place; I didn't mean to; I heard some talk about his pension being vetoed from Miss Leighton." He addressed these exculpations to March's grave face, and to the pitying deprecation in the eyes of Conrad Dryfoos, whom Lindau's roaring wrath had summoned to the door. "But I'll make it all right with him the next time he comes. I didn't know

he was loaded, or I wouldn't have monkeyed with him."

"Lindau does himself injustice when he gets to talking in that way," said March. "I hate to hear him. He's as good an American as any of us; and it's only because he has too high an ideal of us——"

"Oh, go on! Rub it in—rub it in!" cried Fulkerson, clutching his hair in suffering, which was not altogether burlesque. "How did I know he had renounced his 'bension'? Why didn't you tell me?"

"I didn't know it myself. I only knew that he had none, and I didn't ask, for I had a notion that it might be a painful subject."

Fulkerson tried to turn it off lightly. "Well, he's a noble old fellow; pity he drinks." March would not smile, and Fulkerson broke out: "Dog on it! I'll make it up to the old fool the next time he comes. I don't like that dynamite talk of his; but any man that's given his hand to the country has got mine in his grip for good. Why, March! You don't suppose I wanted to hurt his feelings, do you?"

"Why, of course not, Fulkerson."

But they could not get away from a certain ruefulness for that time, and in the evening Fulkerson came round to March's to say that he had got Lindau's address from Conrad, and had looked him up at his lodgings.

"Well, there isn't so much bric-à-brac there, quite, as Mrs. Green left you; but I've made it all right with Lindau, as far as I'm concerned. I told him I

didn't know when I spoke that way, and I honoured him for sticking to his 'brincibles'; I don't believe in his brincibles; and we wept on each other's necks—at least, he did. Dogged if he didn't kiss me before I knew what he was up to. He said I was his chenerous yong friendt, and he begged my barton if he had said anything to wound me. I tell you it was an affecting scene, March; and rats enough round in that old barracks where he lives to fit out a first-class case of *delirium tremens*. What does he stay there for? He's not obliged to?"

Lindau's reasons, as March repeated them, affected Fulkerson as deliciously comical; but after that he confined his pleasantries at the office to Beaton and Conrad Dryfoos, or, as he said, he spent the rest of the summer in keeping Lindau smoothed up.

It is doubtful if Lindau altogether liked this as well. Perhaps he missed the occasions Fulkerson used to give him of bursting out against the millionaires; and he could not well go on denouncing as the slave of gabidal a man who had behaved to him as Fulkerson had done, though Fulkerson's servile relations to capital had been in nowise changed by his noble conduct.

Their relations continued to wear this irksome character of mutual forbearance; and when Dryfoos returned in October and Fulkerson revived the question of that dinner in celebration of the success of *Every Other Week*, he carried his complaisance to an extreme that alarmed March for the consequences.

V.

"You see," Fulkerson explained, "I find that the old man has got an idea of his own about that banquet, and I guess there's some sense in it. He wants to have a preliminary little dinner, where we can talk the thing up first—half a dozen of us; and he wants to give us the dinner at his house. Well, that's no harm. I don't believe the old man ever gave a dinner, and he'd like to show off a little; there's a good deal of human nature in the old man, after all. He thought of you, of course, and Colonel Woodburn, and Beaton, and me at the foot of the table; and Conrad; and I suggested Kendricks: he's such a nice little chap; and the old man himself brought up the idea of Lindau. He said you told him something about him, and he asked why couldn't we have him, too; and I jumped at it."

"Have Lindau to dinner?" asked March.

"Certainly; why not? Father Dryfoos has a notion of paying the old fellow a compliment for what he done for the country. There won't be any trouble about it. You can sit alongside of him, and cut up his meat for him, and help him to things——"

"Yes, but it won't *do*, Fulkerson! I don't be-

lieve Lindau ever had on a dress-coat in his life, and I don't believe his 'brincibles' would let him wear one."

"Well, neither had Dryfoos, for the matter of that. He's as high-principled as old Pan-Electric himself, when it comes to a dress-coat," said Fulkerson. "We're all going to go in business dress; the old man stipulated for that."

"It isn't the dress-coat alone," March resumed. "Lindau and Dryfoos wouldn't get on. You know they're opposite poles in everything. You mustn't do it. Dryfoos will be sure to say something to outrage Lindau's 'brincibles,' and there'll be an explosion. It's all well enough for Dryfoos to feel grateful to Lindau, and his wish to honour him does him credit; but to have Lindau to dinner isn't the way. At the best, the old fellow would be very unhappy in such a house; he would have a bad conscience; and I should be sorry to have him feel that he'd been recreant to his 'brincibles'; they're about all he's got, and whatever we think of them, we're bound to respect his fidelity to them." March warmed toward Lindau in taking this view of him. "I should feel ashamed if I didn't protest against his being put in a false position. After all, he's my old friend, and I shouldn't like to have him do himself injustice if he *is* a crank."

"Of course," said Fulkerson, with some trouble in his face. "I appreciate your feeling. But there ain't any danger," he added buoyantly. "Anyhow,

you spoke too late, as the Irishman said to the chicken when he swallowed him in a fresh egg. I've asked Lindau, and he's accepted with blayzure; that's what he says."

March made no other comment than a shrug.

"You'll see," Fulkerson continued, "it'll go off all right. I'll engage to make it, and I won't hold anybody else responsible."

In the course of his married life March had learned not to censure the irretrievable; but this was just what his wife had not learned; and she poured out so much astonishment at what Fulkerson had done, and so much disapproval, that March began to palliate the situation a little.

"After all, it isn't a question of life and death; and, if it were, I don't see how it's to be helped now."

"Oh, it's not to be helped *now*. But I *am* surprised at Mr. Fulkerson."

"Well, Fulkerson has his moments of being merely human, too."

Mrs. March would not deign a direct defence of her favourite. "Well, I'm glad there are not to be ladies."

"I don't know. Dryfoos thought of having ladies, but it seems your infallible Fulkerson overruled him. Their presence might have kept Lindau and our host in bounds."

It had become part of the Marches' conjugal joke for him to pretend that she could allow nothing wrong in Fulkerson, and he now laughed with a

mocking air of having expected it when she said : " Well, then, if Mr. Fulkerson says he will see that it all comes out right, I suppose you must trust his tact. I wouldn't trust yours, Basil. The first wrong step was taken when Mr. Lindau was asked to help on the magazine."

" Well, it was your infallible Fulkerson that took the step, or at least suggested it. I'm happy to say *I* had totally forgotten my early friend."

Mrs. March was daunted and silenced for a moment. Then she said : " Oh, pshaw ! You know well enough he did it to please you."

" I'm very glad he didn't do it to please *you*, Isabel," said her husband, with affected seriousness. " Though perhaps he did."

He began to look at the humorous aspect of the affair, which it certainly had, and to comment on the singular incongruities which *Every Other Week* was destined to involve at every moment of its career. " I wonder if I'm mistaken in supposing that no other periodical was ever like it. Perhaps all periodicals are like it. But I don't believe there's another publication in New York that could bring together, in honour of itself, a fraternity and equality crank like poor old Lindau, and a belated sociological crank like Woodburn, and a truculent speculator like old Dryfoos, and a humanitarian dreamer like young Dryfoos, and a sentimentalist like me, and a nondescript like Beaton, and a pure advertising essence like Fulkerson, and a society spirit like Kendricks. If we could only allow one

another to talk uninterruptedly all the time, the dinner would be the greatest success in the world, and we should come home full of the highest mutual respect. But I suspect we can't manage that—even your infallible Fulkerson couldn't work it—and I'm afraid that there'll be some listening that'll spoil the pleasure of the time."

March was so well pleased with this view of the case that he suggested the idea involved to Fulkerson. Fulkerson was too good a fellow not to laugh at another man's joke, but he laughed a little ruefully, and he seemed worn with more than one kind of care in the interval that passed between the present time and the night of the dinner.

Dryfoos necessarily depended upon him for advice concerning the scope and nature of the dinner, but he received the advice suspiciously, and contested points of obvious propriety with pertinacious stupidity. Fulkerson said that when it came to the point he would rather have had the thing, as he called it, at Delmonico's or some other restaurant; but when he found that Dryfoos's pride was bound up in having it at his own house, he gave way to him. Dryfoos also wanted his woman-cook to prepare the dinner, but Fulkerson persuaded him that this would not do; he must have it from a caterer. Then Dryfoos wanted his maids to wait at table, but Fulkerson convinced him that this would be incongruous at a man's dinner. It was decided that the dinner should be sent in from Frescobaldi's, and Dryfoos went with Fulkerson to discuss it with

the caterer. He insisted upon having everything explained to him, and the reason for having it, and not something else in its place; and he treated Fulkerson and Frescobaldi as if they were in league to impose upon him. There were moments when Fulkerson saw the varnish of professional politeness cracking on the Neapolitan's volcanic surface, and caught a glimpse of the lava fires of the cook's nature beneath; he trembled for Dryfoos, who was walking rough-shod over him in the security of an American who had known how to make his money, and must know how to spend it; but he got him safely away at last, and gave Frescobaldi a wink of sympathy for his shrug of exhaustion as they turned to leave him.

It was at first a relief and then an anxiety with Fulkerson that Lindau did not come about after accepting the invitation to dinner, until he appeared at Dryfoos's house, prompt to the hour. There was, to be sure, nothing to bring him; but Fulkerson was uneasily aware that Dryfoos expected to meet him at the office, and perhaps receive some verbal acknowledgment of the honour done him. Dryfoos, he could see, thought he was doing all his invited guests a favour; and while he stood in a certain awe of them as people of much greater social experience than himself, regarded them with a kind of contempt, as people who were going to have a better dinner at his house than they could ever afford to have at their own. He had finally not spared expense upon it; after pushing Frescobaldi to the

point of eruption with his misgivings and suspicions at the first interview, he had gone to him a second time alone, and told him not to let the money stand between him and anything he would like to do. In the absence of Frescobaldi's fellow-conspirator he restored himself in the caterer's esteem by adding whatever he suggested ; and Fulkerson, after trembling for the old man's niggardliness, was now afraid of a fantastic profusion in the feast. Dryfoos had reduced the scale of the banquet as regarded the number of guests, but a confusing remembrance of what Fulkerson had wished to do remained with him in part, and up to the day of the dinner he dropped in at Frescobaldi's and ordered more dishes and more of them. He impressed the Italian as an American original of a novel kind ; and when he asked Fulkerson how Dryfoos had made his money, and learned that it was primarily in natural gas, he made note of some of his eccentric tastes as peculiarities that were to be caressed in any future natural-gas millionaire who might fall into his hands. He did not begrudge the time he had to give in explaining to Dryfoos the relation of the different wines to the different dishes ; Dryfoos was apt to substitute a costlier wine where he could for a cheaper one, and he gave Frescobaldi *carte blanche* for the decoration of the table with pieces of artistic confectionery. Among these the caterer designed one for a surprise to his patron and a delicate recognition of the source of his wealth, which he found Dryfoos very willing to

talk about, when he intimated that he knew what it was.

Dryfoos left it to Fulkerson to invite the guests, and he found ready acceptance of his politeness from Kendricks, who rightly regarded the dinner as a part of the *Every Other Week* business, and was too sweet and kind-hearted, anyway, not to seem very glad to come. March was a matter of course; but in Colonel Woodburn Fulkerson encountered a reluctance which embarrassed him the more because he was conscious of having, for motives of his own, rather strained a point in suggesting the colonel to Dryfoos as a fit subject for invitation. There had been only one of the colonel's articles printed as yet, and though it had made a sensation in its way, and started the talk about that number, still it did not fairly constitute him a member of the staff, or even entitle him to recognition as a regular contributor. Fulkerson felt so sure of pleasing him with Dryfoos's message that he delivered it in full family council at the widow's. His daughter received it with all the enthusiasm that Fulkerson had hoped for, but the colonel said stiffly, "I have not the pleasure of knowing Mr. Dryfoos." Miss Woodburn appeared ready to fall upon him at this, but controlled herself, as if aware that filial authority had its limits, and pressed her lips together without saying anything.

"Yes, I know," Fulkerson admitted. "But it isn't a usual case. Mr. Dryfoos don't go in much for the conventionalities; I reckon he don't know

much about 'em, come to boil it down; and he hoped"—here Fulkerson felt the necessity of inventing a little—"that you would excuse any want of ceremony; it's to be such an informal affair, anyway; we're all going in business dress, and there ain't going to be any ladies. He'd have come himself to ask you, but he's a kind of a bashful old fellow. It's all right, Colonel Woodburn."

"I take it that it is, sir," said the colonel courteously, but with unabated state, "coming from you. But in these matters we have no right to burden our friends with our decisions."

"Of course, of course," said Fulkerson, feeling that he had been delicately told to mind his own business.

"I understand," the colonel went on, "the relation that Mr. Dryfoos bears to the periodical in which you have done me the hono' to print my papah, but this is a question of passing the bounds of a purely business connection, and of eating the salt of a man whom you do not definitely know to be a gentleman."

"Mah goodness!" his daughter broke in. "If you bah your own salt with his money——"

"It is supposed that I earn his money before I buy my salt with it," returned her father severely. "And in these times, when money is got in heaps, through the natural decay of our nefarious commercialism, it behooves a gentleman to be scrupulous that the hospitality offered him is not the profusion of a thief with his booty. I don't say that Mr.

Dryfoos's good-fortune is not honest. I simply say that I know nothing about it, and that I should prefer to know something before I sat down at his board."

"You're all right, colonel," said Fulkerson, "and so is Mr. Dryfoos. I give you my word that there are no flies on his personal integrity, if that's what you mean. He's hard, and he'd push an advantage, but I don't believe he would take an unfair one. He's speculated and made money every time, but I never heard of his wrecking a railroad or belonging to any swindling company or any grinding monopoly. He does chance it in stocks, but he's always played on the square, if you call stocks gambling."

"May I think this over till morning?" asked the colonel.

"Oh, certainly, certainly," said Fulkerson eagerly. "I don't know as there's any hurry."

Miss Woodburn found a chance to murmur to him before he went: "He'll come. And Ah'm so much oblahged, Mr. Fulkerson. Ah jost know it's all you' doing, and it will give papa a chance to toak to some new people, and get away from us evahlastin' women for once."

"I don't see why any one should want to do that," said Fulkerson, with grateful gallantry. "But I'll be dogged," he said to March when he told him about this odd experience, "if I ever expected to find Colonel Woodburn on old Lindau's ground. He did come round handsomely this morning at breakfast and apologised for taking time to think

the invitation over before he accepted. ‘You understand,’ he says, ‘that if it had been to the table of some friend not so prosperous as Mr. Dryfoos—your friend Mr. March, for instance—it would have been sufficient to know that he was your friend. But in these days it is a duty that a gentleman owes himself to consider whether he wishes to know a rich man or not. The chances of making money disreputably are so great that the chances are against a man who has made money if he’s made a great deal of it.’”

March listened with a face of ironical insinuation. “That was very good; and he seems to have had a good deal of confidence in your patience and in your sense of his importance to the occasion——”

“No, no,” Fulkerson protested, “there’s none of that kind of thing about the colonel. I *told* him to take time to think it over; he’s the simplest-hearted old fellow in the world.”

“I should say so. After all, he didn’t give any reason he had for accepting. But perhaps the young lady had the reason.”

“Pshaw, March!” said Fulkerson.

VI.

So far as the Dryfoos family was concerned, the dinner might as well have been given at Frescobaldi's rooms. None of the ladies appeared. Mrs. Dryfoos was glad to escape to her own chamber, where she sat before an autumnal fire, shaking her head and talking to herself at times, with the foreboding of evil which old women like her make part of their religion. The girls stood just out of sight at the head of the stairs, and disputed which guest it was at each arrival; Mrs. Mandel had gone to her room to write letters, after beseeching them not to stand there. When Kendricks came, Christine gave Mela a little pinch, equivalent to a little mocking shriek; for, on the ground of his long talk with Mela at Mrs. Horn's, in the absence of any other admirer, they based a superstition of his interest in her; when Beaton came, Mela returned the pinch, but awkwardly, so that it hurt, and then Christine involuntarily struck her.

Frescobaldi's men were in possession everywhere: they had turned the cook out of her kitchen and the waitress out of her pantry; the reluctant Irishman at the door was supplemented by a vivid Italian,

who spoke French with the guests, and said, "*Bien, Monsieur,*" and "*Toute suite,*" and "*Merci!*" to all, as he took their hats and coats, and effused a hospitality that needed no language but the gleam of his eyes and teeth and the play of his eloquent hands. From his professional dress-coat, lustrous with the grease spotted on it at former dinners and parties, they passed to the frocks of the elder and younger Dryfoos in the drawing-room, which assumed informality for the affair, but did not put their wearers wholly at their ease. The father's coat was of black broadcloth, and he wore it unbuttoned; the skirts were long, and the sleeves came down to his knuckles; he shook hands with his guests, and the same dryness seemed to be in his palm and throat, as he huskily asked each to take a chair. Conrad's coat was of modern texture and cut, and was buttoned about him as if it concealed a bad conscience within its lapels; he met March with his entreating smile, and he seemed no more capable of coping with the situation than his father. They both waited for Fulkerson, who went about and did his best to keep life in the party during the half-hour that passed before they sat down at dinner. Beaton stood gloomily aloof, as if waiting to be approached on the right basis before yielding an inch of his ground; Colonel Woodburn, awaiting the moment when he could sally out on his hobby, kept himself intrenched within the dignity of a gentleman, and examined askance the figure of old Lindau as he stared about the room, with his fine

head up, and his empty sleeve dangling over his wrist. March felt obliged to him for wearing a new coat in the midst of that hostile luxury, and he was glad to see Dryfoos make up to him and begin to talk with him, as if he wished to show him particular respect, though it might have been because he was less afraid of him than of the others. He heard Lindau saying, "Boat, the name is Choarman?" and Dryfoos beginning to explain his Pennsylvania Dutch origin, and he suffered himself, with a sigh of relief, to fall into talk with Kendricks, who was always pleasant; he was willing to talk about something besides himself, and had no opinions that he was not ready to hold in abeyance for the time being out of kindness to others. In that group of impassioned individualities, March felt him a refuge and comfort—with his harmless dilettante intention of some day writing a novel, and his belief that he was meantime collecting material for it.

Fulkerson, while breaking the ice for the whole company, was mainly engaged in keeping Colonel Woodburn thawed out. He took Kendricks away from March and presented him to the Colonel as a person who, like himself, was looking into social conditions; he put one hand on Kendricks' shoulder, and one on the colonel's, and made some flattering joke, apparently at the expense of the young fellow, and then left them. March heard Kendricks protest in vain, and the colonel say gravely: "I do not wonder, sir, that these things interest you. They constitute a problem which society must solve or

which will dissolve society," and he knew from that formula, which the colonel had once used with him, that he was laying out a road for the exhibition of the hobby's paces later.

Fulkerson came back to March, who had turned toward Conrad Dryfoos, and said, "If we don't get this thing going pretty soon, it'll be the death of me," and just then Frescobaldi's butler came in and announced to Dryfoos that dinner was served. The old man looked toward Fulkerson with a troubled glance, as if he did not know what to do; he made a gesture to touch Lindau's elbow. Fulkerson called out, "*Here's* Colonel Woodburn, Mr. Dryfoos," as if Dryfoos were looking for him; and he set the example of what he was to do by taking Lindau's arm himself. "Mr. Lindau is going to sit at my end of the table, alongside of March. Stand not upon the order of your going, gentlemen, but fall in at once." He contrived to get Dryfoos and the colonel before him, and he let March follow with Kendricks. Conrad came last with Beaton, who had been turning over the music at the piano, and chafing inwardly at the whole affair. At the table Colonel Woodburn was placed on Dryfoos's right, and March on his left. March sat on Fulkerson's right, with Lindau next him; and the young men occupied the other seats.

"Put you next to March, Mr. Lindau," said Fulkerson, "so you can begin to put Apollinaris in his champagne-glass at the right moment; you know his little weakness of old; sorry to say it's grown on him."

March laughed with kindly acquiescence in Fulkerson's wish to start the gaiety, and Lindau patted him on the shoulder. "I know his weakness. If he likes a glass of wine, it is because his loaf includes even his enemy, as Shakespeare called it."

"Ah, but Shakespeare couldn't have been thinking of champagne," said Kendricks.

"I suppose, sir," Colonel Woodburn interposed with lofty courtesy, "champagne could hardly have been known in his day."

"I suppose not, colonel," returned the younger man deferentially. "He seemed to think that sack and sugar might be a fault; but he didn't mention champagne."

"Perhaps he felt there was no question about that," suggested Beaton, who then felt that he had not done himself justice in the sally.

"I wonder just when champagne did come in," said March.

"I know when it ought to come in," said Fulkerson. "Before the soup!"

They all laughed, and gave themselves the air of drinking champagne out of tumblers every day, as men like to do. Dryfoos listened uneasily; he did not quite understand the allusions, though he knew what Shakespeare was, well enough; Conrad's face expressed a gentle deprecation of joking on such a subject, but he said nothing.

The talk ran on briskly through the dinner. The young men tossed the ball back and forth; they made some wild shots, but they kept it going, and

they laughed when they were hit. The wine loosed Colonel Woodburn's tongue; he became very companionable with the young fellows; with the feeling that a literary dinner ought to have a didactic scope, he praised Scott and Addison as the only authors fit to form the minds of gentlemen.

Kendricks agreed with him, but wished to add the name of Flaubert as a master of style. "Style, you know," he added, "is the man."

"Very true, sir; you are quite right, sir," the colonel assented; he wondered who Flaubert was.

Beaton praised Baudelaire and Maupassant; he said these were the masters. He recited some lurid verses from Baudelaire; Lindau pronounced them a disgrace to human nature, and gave a passage from Victor Hugo on Louis Napoleon, with his heavy German accent, and then he quoted Schiller. "Ach, boat that iss peaudifool! Not zo?" he demanded of March.

"Yes, beautiful; but, of course, you know I think there's nobody like Heine!"

Lindau threw back his great old head and laughed, showing a want of teeth under his moustache. He put his hand on March's back. "This poy—he wass a poy den—wass so gracy to pekin reading Heine that he gommence with the tictionary bevore he knows any crammar, and ve bick it out vort by vort togeder."

"He was a pretty cay poy in those days, heigh, Lindau?" asked Fulkerson, burlesquing the old man's accent, with an impudent wink that made Lindau himself laugh. "Back in the dark ages, I

mean, there in Indianapolis. Just how long ago did you old codgers meet there, anyway?" Fulkerson saw the restiveness in Dryfoos's eye at the purely literary course the talk had taken; he had intended it to lead up that way to business, to *Every Other Week*; but he saw that it was leaving Dryfoos too far out, and he wished to get it on the personal ground, where everybody is at home.

"Ledt me zee," mused Lindau. "Wass it in fifty-nine or zixty, Passil? Idt wass a year or dwo pefore the war proke oudt, anyway."

"Those were exciting times," said Dryfoos, making his first entry into the general talk. "I went down to Indianapolis with the first company from our place, and I saw the red-shirts pouring in everywhere. They had a song—

"Oh, never mind the weather, but git over double trouble,
For we're bound for the land of Canaan."

The fellows locked arms and went singin' it up and down four or five abreast in the moonlight; crowded everybody else off the sidewalk."

"I rememper, I rememper," said Lindau, nodding his head slowly up and down. "A coodt many off them nefer gome pack from that landt of Ganaan, Mr. Dryfoos?"

"You're right, Mr. Lindau. But I reckon it was worth it—the country we've got now. Here, young man!" He caught the arm of the waiter who was going round with the champagne bottle. "Fill up Mr. Lindau's glass, there. I want to drink the

health of those old times with him. Here's to your empty sleeve, Mr. Lindau. God bless it! No offence to *you*, Colonel Woodburn," said Dryfoos, turning to him before he drank.

"Not at all, sir, not at all," said the colonel. "I will drink with you, if you will permit me."

"We'll all drink—standing," cried Fulkerson. "Help March to get up, somebody! Fill high the bowl with Samian Apollinaris for Coonrod! Now, then, hurrah for Lindau!"

They cheered, and hammered on the table with the butts of their knife-handles. Lindau remained seated. The tears came into his eyes; he said, "I thank you, chendlemen," and hiccupped.

"I'd 'a' went into the war myself," said Dryfoos, "but I was raisin' a family of young children, and I didn't see how I could leave my farm. But I helped to fill up the quota at every call, and when the volunteering stopped I went round with the subscription paper myself; and we offered as good bounties as any in the State. My substitute was killed in one of the last skirmishes—in fact, after Lee's surrender—and I've took care of his family, more or less, ever since."

"By the way, March," said Fulkerson, "what sort of an idea would it be to have a good war-story—might be a serial—in the magazine? The war has never fully panned out in fiction yet. It was used a good deal just after it was over, and then it was dropped. I think it's time to take it up again. I believe it would be a card."

It was running in March's mind that Dryfoos had an old rankling shame in his heart for not having gone into the war, and that he had often made that explanation of his course without having ever been satisfied with it. He felt sorry for him; the fact seemed pathetic; it suggested a dormant nobleness in the man.

Beaton was saying to Fulkerson, "You might get a series of sketches by substitutes; the substitutes haven't been much heard from in the war literature. How would 'The Autobiography of a Substitute' do? You might follow him up to the moment he was killed in the other man's place, and inquire whether he had any right to the feelings of a hero when he was only hired in the place of one. Might call it 'The Career of a Deputy Hero.'"

"I fancy," said March, "that there was a great deal of mixed motive in the men who went into the war as well as in those who kept out of it. We canonised all that died or suffered in it, but some of them must have been self-seeking and low-minded, like men in other vocations." He found himself saying this in Dryfoos's behalf; the old man looked at him gratefully at first, he thought, and then suspiciously.

Lindau turned his head toward him and said: "You are righdt, Passil; you are righdt. I haf zeen on the fieldt of pattle the voarst eggspitions of human paseness—chelousy, fanity, ecodistic bridte. I haf zeen men in the face off death itself goffered by motifes as low as—as business motifes."

"Well," said Fulkerson, "it would be a grand thing for *Every Other Week* if we could get some of those ideas worked up into a series. It would make a lot of talk."

Colonel Woodburn ignored him in saying, "I think, Major Lindau——"

"High brifate; prefet gorporal," the old man interrupted, in rejection of the title.

Kendricks laughed and said, with a glance of appreciation at Lindau, "Brevet corporal is good."

Colonel Woodburn frowned a little, and passed over the joke. "I think Mr. Lindau is right. Such exhibitions were common to both sides, though if you gentlemen will pardon me for saying so, I think they were less frequent on ours. We were fighting more immediately for existence; we were fewer than you were, and we knew it; we felt more intensely that if each were not for all, then none was for any."

The colonel's words made their impression. Dryfoos said with authority, "That is so."

"Colonel Woodburn," Fulkerson called out, "if you'll work up those ideas into a short paper—say three thousand words—I'll engage to make March take it."

The colonel went on without replying: "But Mr. Lindau is right in characterising some of the motives that led men to the cannon's mouth as no higher than business motives, and his comparison is the most forcible that he could have used. I was very much struck by it."

The hobby was out, the colonel was in the saddle

with so firm a seat that no effort sufficed to dislodge him. The dinner went on from course to course with barbaric profusion, and from time to time Fulkerson tried to bring the talk back to *Every Other Week*. But perhaps because that was only the ostensible and not the real object of the dinner, which was to bring a number of men together under Dryfoos's roof, and make them the witnesses of his splendour, make them feel the power of his wealth, Fulkerson's attempts failed. The colonel showed how commercialism was the poison at the heart of our national life ; how we began as a simple, agricultural people, who had fled to these shores with the instinct, divinely implanted, of building a State such as the sun never shone upon before ; how we had conquered the wilderness and the savage ; how we had flung off, in our struggle with the mother-country, the trammels of tradition and precedent, and had settled down, a free nation, to the practice of the arts of peace ; how the spirit of commercialism had stolen insidiously upon us, and the infernal impulse of competition had embroiled us in a perpetual warfare of interests, developing the worst passions of our nature, and teaching us to trick and betray and destroy one another in the strife for money, till now that impulse had exhausted itself, and we found competition gone and the whole economic problem in the hands of monopolies—the Standard Oil Company, the Sugar Trust, the Rubber Trust, and what not. And now what was the next thing ? Affairs could not remain as they

were; it was impossible; and what was the next thing?

The company listened for the main part silently. Dryfoos tried to grasp the idea of commercialism as the colonel seemed to hold it; he conceived of it as something like the dry-goods business on a vast scale, and he knew he had never been in that. He did not like to hear competition called infernal; he had always supposed it was something sacred; but he approved of what Colonel Woodburn said of the Standard Oil Company; it was all true; the Standard Oil had squeezed Dryfoos once, and made him sell it a lot of oil-wells by putting down the price of oil so low in that region that he lost money on every barrel he pumped.

All the rest listened silently, except Lindau; at every point the colonel made against the present condition of things he said more and more fiercely, "You are right, you are right." His eyes glowed, his hand played with his knife-hilt. When the colonel demanded, "And what is the next thing?" he threw himself forward, and repeated, "Yes, sir! What is the next thing?"

"Natural gas, by thunder!" shouted Fulkerson.

One of the waiters had profited by Lindau's posture to lean over him and put down in the middle of the table a structure in white sugar. It expressed Frescobaldi's conception of a derrick, and a touch of nature had been added in the flame of brandy, which burned luridly up from a small pit in the centre of the base, and represented the gas in

combustion as it issued from the ground. Fulkerson burst into a roar of laughter with the words that recognised Frescobaldi's personal tribute to Dryfoos. Everybody rose and peered over at the thing, while he explained the work of sinking a gas-well, as he had already explained it to Frescobaldi. In the midst of his lecture he caught sight of the caterer himself, where he stood in the pantry doorway, smiling with an artist's anxiety for the effect of his masterpiece.

"Come in, come in, Frescobaldi! We want to congratulate you," Fulkerson called to him. "Here, gentlemen! Here's Frescobaldi's health."

They all drank; and Frescobaldi, smiling brilliantly and rubbing his hands as he bowed right and left, permitted himself to say to Dryfoos, "You are please; no? You like?"

"First-rate, first-rate!" said the old man; but when the Italian had bowed himself out and his guests had sunk into their seats again, he said dryly to Fulkerson, "I reckon they didn't have to torpedo that well, or the derrick wouldn't look quite so nice and clean."

"Yes," Fulkerson answered, "and that ain't quite the style—that little wiggly-waggly blue flame—that the gas acts when you touch off a good vein of it. This might do for weak-gas;" and he went on to explain: "They call it weak-gas when they tap it two or three hundred feet down; and anybody can sink a well in his backyard and get enough gas to light and heat his house. I remember one fellow

that had it blazing up from a pipe through a flower-bed, just like a jet of water from a fountain. My, my, my! You fel—you gentlemen—ought to go out and see that country, all of you. Wish we *could* torpedo this well, Mr. Dryfoos, and let 'em see how it works! Mind that one you torpedoed for me? You know, when they sink a well," he went on to the company, "they can't always most generally sometimes tell whether they're goin' to get gas or oil or salt-water. Why, when they first began to bore for salt-water out on the Kanawha, back about the beginning of the century, they used to get gas now and then, and then they considered it a failure; they called a gas-well a blower, and give it up in disgust; the time wasn't ripe for gas yet. Now they bore away sometimes till they get half-way to China, and don't seem to strike anything worth speaking of. Then they put a dynamite torpedo down in the well and explode it. They have a little bar of iron that they call a Go-devil, and they just drop it down on the business end of the torpedo, and then stand from under, if *you* please! You hear a noise, and in about half a minute you begin to *see* one, and it begins to rain oil and mud and salt-water and rocks and pitchforks and adoptive citizens; and when it clears up the derrick's painted—got a coat on that'll wear in any climate. That's what our honoured host meant. Generally get some visiting lady, when there's one round, to drop the Go-devil. But that day we had to put up with Conrad here. They offered to let

me drop it, but I declined. I told 'em I hadn't much practice with Go-devils in the newspaper syndicate business, and I wasn't very well myself, anyway. Astonishing," Fulkerson continued, with the air of relieving his explanation by an anecdote, "how reckless they get using dynamite when they're torpedoing wells. We stopped at one place where a fellow was handling the cartridges pretty freely, and Mr. Dryfoos happened to caution him a little, and that ass came up with one of 'em in his hand, and began to pound it on the buggy-wheel to show us how safe it was. I turned green, I was so scared ; but Mr. Dryfoos kept his colour, and kind of coaxed the fellow till he quit. You could see he was the fool kind, that if you tried to stop him he'd keep on hammering that cartridge, just to show that it wouldn't explode, till he blew you into Kingdom Come. When we got him to go away, Mr. Dryfoos drove up to his foreman. 'Pay Sheney off, and discharge him on the spot,' says he. 'He's too safe a man to have round ; he knows too much about dynamite.' I never saw anybody so cool."

Dryfoos modestly dropped his head under Fulkerson's flattery and, without lifting it, turned his eyes toward Colonel Woodburn. "I had all sorts of men to deal with in developing my property out there, but I had very little trouble with them, generally speaking."

"Ah, ah! you foundt the labouring-man reasonable—draetable—tocile?" Lindau put in.

"Yes, generally speaking," Dryfoos answered.

"They mostly knew which side of their bread was buttered. I did have one little difficulty at one time. It happened to be when Mr. Fulkerson was out there. Some of the men tried to form a union——"

"No, no!" cried Fulkerson. "Let *me* tell that! I know you wouldn't do yourself justice, Mr. Dryfoos, and I want 'em to know how a strike can be managed, if you take it in time. You see, some of those fellows got a notion that there ought to be a union among the working-men to keep up wages, and dictate to the employers, and Mr. Dryfoos's foreman was the ringleader in the business. They understood pretty well that as soon as he found it out that foreman would walk the plank, and so they watched out till they thought they had Mr. Dryfoos just where they wanted him—everything on the keen jump, and every man worth his weight in diamonds—and then they come to him, and told him to sign a promise to keep that foreman to the end of the season, or till he was through with the work on the Dryfoos and Hendry Addition, under penalty of having them all knock off. Mr. Dryfoos smelt a mice, but he couldn't tell where the mice was; he saw that they did have him, and he signed, of course. There wasn't anything really against the fellow, anyway; he was a first-rate man, and he did his duty every time; only he'd got some of those ideas into his head, and they turned it. Mr. Dryfoos signed, and then he laid low."

March saw Lindau listening with a mounting in-

tensity, and heard him murmur in German, "Shameful ! shameful !"

Fulkerson went on : " Well, it wasn't long before they began to show their hand, but Mr. Dryfoos kept dark. He agreed to everything ; there never was such an obliging capitalist before ; there wasn't a thing they asked of him that he didn't do, with the greatest of pleasure, and all went merry as a marriage-bell till one morning a whole gang of fresh men marched into the Dryfoos and Hendry Addition, under the escort of a dozen Pinkertons with repeating rifles at half-cock, and about fifty fellows found themselves out of a job. You never saw such a mad set."

" Pretty neat," said Kendricks, who looked at the affair purely from an æsthetic point of view. " Such a *coup* as that would tell tremendously in a play."

" That was vile treason," said Lindau in German to March. " He's an infamous traitor ! I cannot stay here. I must go."

He struggled to rise, while March held him by the coat, and implored him under his voice, " For Heaven's sake, don't, Lindau ! You owe it to yourself not to make a scene, if you come here." Something in it all affected him comically ; he could not help laughing.

The others were discussing the matter, and seemed not to have noticed Lindau, who controlled himself and sighed : " You are right. I must have patience."

Beaton was saying to Dryfoos, " Pity your Pinkertons couldn't have given them a few shots before they left."

"No, that wasn't necessary," said Dryfoos. "I succeeded in breaking up the union. I entered into an agreement with other parties not to employ any man who would not swear that he was non-union. If they had attempted violence, of course they could have been shot. But there was no fear of that. Those fellows can always be depended upon to cut each other's throats in the long-run."

"But sometimes," said Colonel Woodburn, who had been watching throughout for a chance to mount his hobby again, "they make a good deal of trouble first. How was it in the great railroad strike of '77?"

"Well, I guess there was a little trouble that time, colonel," said Fulkerson. "But the men that undertake to override the laws and paralyse the industries of a country like this generally get left in the end."

"Yes, sir, generally; and up to a certain point, always. But it's the exceptional that is apt to happen, as well as the unexpected. And a little reflection will convince any gentleman here that there is always a danger of the exceptional in your system. The fact is, those fellows have the game in their own hands already. A strike of the whole body of the Brotherhood of Engineers alone would starve out the entire Atlantic seaboard in a week; labour insurrection could make head at a dozen given points, and your government couldn't move a man over the roads without the help of the engineers."

"That is so," said Kendrick, struck by the

dramatic character of the conjecture. He imagined a fiction dealing with the situation as something already accomplished.

"Why don't some fellow do the *Battle of Dorking* act with that thing?" said Fulkerson. "It would be a card."

"Exactly what I was thinking, Mr. Fulkerson," said Kendricks.

Fulkerson laughed. "Telepathy—clear case of mind-transference. Better see March, here, about it. *I'd* like to have it in *Every Other Week*. It would make talk."

"Perhaps it might set your people to thinking as well as talking," said the colonel.

"Well, sir," said Dryfoos, setting his lips so tightly together that his imperial stuck straight outward, "if I had my way, there wouldn't *be* any Brotherhood of Engineers, nor any other kind of labour union in the whole country."

"What!" shouted Lindau. "You would sobbress the unionss of the voarking-men?"

"Yes, I would."

"And what would you do with the unionss of the gabidalists—the drosts—and gompines, and boolss? Would you dake the righdt from one and gif it to the odder?"

"Yes, sir, I would," said Dryfoos, with a wicked look at him.

Lindau was about to roar back at him with some furious protest, but March put his hand on his shoulder imploringly, and Lindau turned to him to

say in German, "But it is infamous—infamous! What kind of man is this? Who is he? He has the heart of a tyrant."

Colonel Woodburn cut in. "You couldn't do that, Mr. Dryfoos, under your system. And if you attempted it, with your conspiracy laws, and that kind of thing, it might bring the climax sooner than you expected. Your commercialised society has built its house on the sands. It will have to go. But I should be sorry if it went before its time."

"You are right, sir," said Lindau. "It would be a pity. I hope it will last till it feels its rottenness, like Herodt. Boat, when its hour comes, when it trops to bicees with the veight off its own gorrubtion—what then?"

"It's not to be supposed that a system of things like this can drop to pieces of its own accord, like the old Republic of Venice," said the colonel. "But when the last vestige of commercial society is gone, then we can begin to build anew; and we shall build upon the central idea, not of the false liberty you now worship, but of responsibility—responsibility. The enlightened, the moneyed, the cultivated class shall be responsible to the central authority—emperor, duke, president; the name does not matter—for the national expense and the national defence, and it shall be responsible to the working-classes of all kinds for homes and lands and implements, and the opportunity to labour at all times. The working-classes shall be responsible to the leisure class for the support of its dignity in peace, and shall be

subject to its command in war. The rich shall warrant the poor against planless production and the ruin that now follows, against danger from without and famine from within, and the poor——”

“No, no, no!” shouted Lindau. “The *State* shall do that—the whole beople. The men who voark shall have and shall eat; and the men that will not voark, they shall sdarfe. But no man need sdarfe. He will go to the State, and the State will see that he haf voark, and that he haf foodt. All the roadts and mills and mines and landts shall be the beople’s and be ron *by* the beople *for* the beople. There shall be no rich and no boor; and there shall not be war any more, for what bower wouldt dare to addack a beople bound togeder in a broderhood like that?”

“Lion and lamb act,” said Fulkerson, not well knowing, after so much champagne, what words he was using.

No one noticed him, and Colonel Woodburn said coldly to Lindau, “You are talking paternalism, sir.”

“And *you* are dalking *feutalism*!” retorted the old man.

The Colonel did not reply. A silence ensued, which no one broke till Fulkerson said: “Well, now, look here. If either one of these millenniums was brought about, by force of arms, or otherwise, what would become of *Every Other Week*? Who would want March for an editor? How would Beaton sell his pictures? Who would print Mr. Kendricks’ little society verses and short stories? What would become of Conrad and his good

works?" Those named grinned in support of Fulkerson's diversion, but Lindau and the colonel did not speak; Dryfoos looked down at his plate, frowning. A waiter came round with cigars, and Fulkerson took one. "Ah," he said, as he bit off the end, and leaned over to the emblematic masterpiece, where the brandy was still feebly flickering, "I wonder if there's enough natural gas left to light my cigar." His effort put the flame out and knocked the derrick over; it broke in fragments on the table. Fulkerson cackled over the ruin: "I wonder if all Moffitt will look that way after labour and capital have fought it out together. I hope this ain't ominous of anything personal, Dryfoos?"

"I'll take the risk of it," said the old man harshly.

He rose mechanically, and Fulkerson said to Frescobaldi's man, "You can bring us the coffee in the library."

The talk did not recover itself there. Lindau would not sit down; he refused coffee, and dismissed himself with a haughty bow to the company; Colonel Woodburn shook hands elaborately all round, when he had smoked his cigar; the others followed him. It seemed to March that his own good-night from Dryfoos was dry and cold.

VII.

MARCH met Fulkerson on the steps of the office next morning, when he arrived rather later than his wont. Fulkerson did not show any of the signs of suffering from the last night's pleasure which painted themselves in March's face. He flirted his hand gaily in the air, and said, "How's your poor head?" and broke into a knowing laugh. "You don't seem to have got up with the lark this morning. The old gentleman is in there with Conrad, as bright as a biscuit; he's beat you down. Well, we did have a good time, didn't we? And old Lindau and the colonel, didn't *they* have a good time? I don't suppose they ever had a chance before to give their theories quite so much air. Oh my, how they did ride over us! I'm just going down to see Beaton about the cover of the Christmas number. I think we ought to try it in three or four colours, if we are going to observe the day at all." He was off before March could pull himself together to ask what Dryfoos wanted at the office at that hour of the morning; he always came in the afternoon on his way uptown.

The fact of his presence renewed the sinister mis-

givings with which March had parted from him the night before, but Fulkerson's cheerfulness seemed to gainsay them; afterwards March did not know whether to attribute this mood to the slipperiness that he was aware of at times in Fulkerson, or to a cynical amusement he might have felt at leaving him alone to the old man, who mounted to his room shortly after March had reached it.

A sort of dumb anger showed itself in his face; his jaw was set so firmly that he did not seem able at once to open it. He asked, without the ceremonies of greeting, "What does that one-armed Dutchman do on this book?"

"What does he do?" March echoed, as people are apt to do with a question that is mandatory and offensive.

"Yes, sir, what does he do? Does he write for it?"

"I suppose you mean Lindau," said March. He saw no reason for refusing to answer Dryfoos's demand, and he decided to ignore its terms. "No, he doesn't write for it in the usual way. He translates for it; he examines the foreign magazines, and draws my attention to anything he thinks of interest. But I told you about this before——"

"I know what you told me, well enough. And I know what he is. He is a red-mouthed labour-agitator. He's one of those foreigners that come here from places where they've never had a decent meal's victuals in their lives, and as soon as they get their stomachs full, they begin to make trouble be-

tween our people and their hands. There's where the strikes come from, and the unions and the secret societies. They come here and break our Sabbath, and teach their atheism. They ought to be hung! Let 'em go back if they don't like it over here. They want to ruin the country."

March could not help smiling a little at the words, which came fast enough now in the hoarse staccato of Dryfoos's passion. "I don't know whom you mean by *they*, generally speaking; but I had the impression that poor old Lindau had once done his best to save the country. I don't always like his way of talking, but I know that he is one of the truest and kindest souls in the world; and he is no more an atheist than I am. He is my friend, and I can't allow him to be misunderstood."

"I don't care *what* he is," Dryfoos broke out, "I won't have him round. He can't have any more work from this office. I want you to stop it. I want you to turn him off."

March was standing at his desk, as he had risen to receive Dryfoos when he entered. He now sat down, and began to open his letters.

"Do you hear?" the old man roared at him. "I want you to turn him off."

"Excuse me, Mr. Dryfoos," said March, succeeding in an effort to speak calmly, "I don't know you, in such a matter as this. My arrangements as editor of *Every Other Week* were made with Mr. Fulkerson. I have always listened to any suggestion he has had to make."

"I don't care for Mr. Fulkerson! He has nothing to do with it," retorted Dryfoos; but he seemed a little daunted by March's position.

"He has everything to do with it as far as I am concerned," March answered, with a steadiness that he did not feel. "I know that you are the owner of the periodical, but I can't receive any suggestion from you, for the reason that I have given. Nobody but Mr. Fulkerson has any right to talk with me about its management."

Dryfoos glared at him for a moment, and demanded threateningly: "Then you say you won't turn that old loafer off? You say that I have got to keep on paying my money out to buy beer for a man that would cut my throat if he got the chance?"

"I say nothing at all, Mr. Dryfoos," March answered. The blood came into his face, and he added: "But I *will* say that if you speak again of Mr. Lindau in those terms, one of us must leave this room. I will not hear you."

Dryfoos looked at him with astonishment; then he struck his hat down on his head, and stamped out of the room and down the stairs; and a vague pity came into March's heart that was not altogether for himself. He might be the greater sufferer in the end, but he was sorry to have got the better of that old man for the moment; and he felt ashamed of the anger into which Dryfoos's anger had surprised him. He knew he could not say too much in defence of Lindau's generosity and unselfishness, and

he had not attempted to defend him as a political economist. He could not have taken any ground in relation to Dryfoos but that which he held, and he felt satisfied that he was right in refusing to receive instructions or commands from him. Yet somehow he was not satisfied with the whole affair, and not merely because his present triumph threatened his final advantage, but because he felt that in his heat he had hardly done justice to Dryfoos's rights in the matter ; it did not quite console him to reflect that Dryfoos had himself made it impossible. He was tempted to go home and tell his wife what had happened, and begin his preparations for the future at once. But he resisted this weakness and kept mechanically about his work, opening the letters and the manuscripts before him with that curious double action of the mind common in men of vivid imaginations. It was a relief when Conrad Dryfoos, having apparently waited to make sure that his father would not return, came up from the counting-room and looked in on March with a troubled face.

"Mr. March," he began, "I hope father hasn't been saying anything to you that you can't overlook. I know he was very much excited, and when he is excited he is apt to say things that he is sorry for."

The apologetic attitude taken for Dryfoos, so different from any attitude the peremptory old man would have conceivably taken for himself, made March smile. "Oh no. I fancy the boot is on the other leg. I suspect I've said some things your father can't overlook, Conrad." He called the

young man by his Christian name partly to distinguish him from his father, partly from the infection of Fulkerson's habit, and partly from a kindness for him that seemed naturally to express itself in that way.

"I know he didn't sleep last night, after you all went away," Conrad pursued, "and of course that made him more irritable; and he was tried a good deal by some of the things that Mr. Lindau said."

"I was tried a good deal myself," said March. "Lindau ought never to have been there."

"No." Conrad seemed only partially to assent.

"I told Mr. Fulkerson so. I warned him that Lindau would be apt to break out in some way. It wasn't just to him, and it wasn't just to your father, to ask him."

"Mr. Fulkerson had a good motive," Conrad gently urged. "He did it because he hurt his feelings that day about the pension."

"Yes, but it was a mistake. He knew that Lindau was inflexible about his principles, as he calls them, and that one of his first principles is to denounce the rich in season and out of season. I don't remember just what he said last night; and I really thought I'd kept him from breaking out in the most offensive way. But your father seems very much incensed."

"Yes, I know," said Conrad.

"Of course, I don't agree with Lindau. I think there are as many good, kind, just people among the rich as there are among the poor, and that they are

as generous and helpful. But Lindau has got hold of one of those partial truths that hurt worse than the whole truth, and——”

“Partial truth!” the young man interrupted. “Didn’t the Saviour himself say, ‘How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God?’”

“Why, bless my soul!” cried March. “Do *you* agree with Lindau?”

“I agree with the Lord Jesus Christ,” said the young man solemnly, and a strange light of fanaticism, of exaltation, came into his wide blue eyes. “And I believe he meant the kingdom of heaven upon this earth, as well as in the skies.”

March threw himself back in his chair and looked at him with a kind of stupefaction, in which his eye wandered to the doorway, where he saw Fulkerson standing, it seemed to him a long time, before he heard him saying, “Hello, hello! What’s the row? Conrad pitching into you on old Lindau’s account, too?”

The young man turned, and after a glance at Fulkerson’s light, smiling face, went out, as if in his present mood he could not bear the contact of that persiflant spirit.

March felt himself getting provisionally very angry again. “Excuse me, Fulkerson, but did you know when you went out what Mr. Dryfoos wanted to see me for?”

“Well, no, I didn’t exactly,” said Fulkerson, taking his usual seat on a chair, and looking over

the back of it at March. "I saw he was on his ear about something, and I thought I'd better not monkey with him much. I supposed he was going to bring you to book about old Lindau, somehow." Fulkerson broke into a laugh.

March remained serious. "Mr. Dryfoos," he said, willing to let the simple statement have its own weight with Fulkerson, and nothing more, "came in here and ordered me to discharge Lindau from his employment on the magazine—to turn him off, as he put it."

"Did he?" asked Fulkerson, with unbroken cheerfulness. "The old man is business, every time. Well, I suppose you can easily get somebody else to do Lindau's work for you. This town is just running over with half-starved linguists. What did you say?"

"What did I say?" March echoed. "Look here, Fulkerson; you may regard this as a joke, but I don't. I'm not used to being spoken to as if I were the foreman of a shop, and told to discharge a sensitive and cultivated man like Lindau, as if he were a drunken mechanic; and if that's your idea of me——"

"Oh, hello, now, March! You mustn't mind the old man's way. He don't mean anything by it—he don't *know* any better, if you come to that."

"Then *I* know better," said March. "I refused to receive any instructions from Mr. Dryfoos, whom I don't know in my relations with *Every Other Week*, and I referred him to you."

"You did?" Fulkerson whistled. "He owns the thing!"

"I don't care who owns the thing," said March. "My negotiations were with you alone from the beginning, and I leave this matter with you. What do you wish done about Lindau?"

"Oh, better let the old fool drop," said Fulkerson. "He'll light on his feet somehow, and it will save a lot of rumpus."

"And if I decline to let him drop?"

"Oh, come, now, March; don't do that," Fulkerson began.

"If I decline to let him drop," March repeated, "what will you do?"

"I'll be dogged if I know *what* I'll do," said Fulkerson. "I hope you won't take that stand. If the old man went so far as to speak to you about it, his mind is made up, and we might as well knock under first as last."

"And do you mean to say that you would not stand by me in what I considered my duty—in a matter of principle?"

"Why, of course, March," said Fulkerson coaxingly, "I mean to do the right thing. But Dryfoos owns the magazine——"

"He doesn't own *me*," said March, rising. "He has made the little mistake of speaking to me as if he did; and when"—March put on his hat and took his overcoat down from its nail—"when you bring me his apologies, or come to say that, having failed to make him understand they were necessary, you

are prepared to stand by me, I will come back to this desk. Otherwise my resignation is at your service."

He started toward the door, and Fulkerson intercepted him. "Ah, now, look here, March! Don't do that! Hang it all, don't you see where it leaves *me*? Now, you just sit down a minute, and talk it over. I can make you see—I can show you——. Why, confound the old Dutch beer-buzzer! Twenty of him wouldn't be worth the trouble he's makin'. Let him go, and the old man 'll come round in time."

"I don't think we've understood each other exactly, Mr. Fulkerson," said March, very haughtily. "Perhaps we never can; but I'll leave you to think it out."

He pushed on, and Fulkerson stood aside to let him pass, with a dazed look and a mechanical movement. There was something comic in his rueful bewilderment to March, who was tempted to smile, but he said to himself that he had as much reason to be unhappy as Fulkerson, and he did not smile. His indignation kept him hot in his purpose to suffer any consequence rather than submit to the dictation of a man like Dryfoos; he felt keenly the degradation of his connection with him, and all his resentment of Fulkerson's original uncandour returned; at the same time his heart ached with foreboding. It was not merely the work in which he had constantly grown happier that he saw taken from him; but he felt the misery of the man who stakes the security and plenty and peace of home

upon some cast, and knows that losing will sweep from him most that most men find sweet and pleasant in life. He faced the fact, which no good man can front without terror, that he was risking the support of his family, and for a point of pride, of honour, which perhaps he had no right to consider in view of the possible adversity. He realised, as every hireling must, no matter how skilfully or gracefully the tie is contrived for his wearing, that he belongs to another, whose will is his law. His indignation was shot with abject impulses to go back and tell Fulkerson that it was all right, and that he gave up. To end the anguish of his struggle he quickened his steps, so that he found he was reaching home almost at a run.

VIII.

HE must have made more clatter than he supposed with his key at the apartment door, for his wife had come to let him in when he flung it open. "Why, Basil," she said, "what's brought you back? Are you sick? You're all pale. Well, no wonder! This is the last of Mr. Fulkerson's dinners you shall go to. You're not strong enough for it, and your stomach will be all out of order for a week. How hot you are! and in a drip of perspiration! Now you'll be sick." She took his hat away, which hung dangling in his hand, and pushed him into a chair with tender impatience. "What is the matter? Has anything happened?"

"Everything has happened," he said, getting his voice after one or two husky endeavours for it; and then he poured out a confused and huddled statement of the case, from which she only got at the situation by prolonged cross-questioning.

At the end she said, "I knew Lindau would get you into trouble."

This cut March to the heart. "Isabel!" he cried reproachfully.

"Oh, I know," she retorted, and the tears began

to come. "I don't wonder you didn't want to say much to me about that dinner at breakfast. I noticed it; but I thought you were just dull, and so I didn't insist. I wish I had, now. If you had told me what Lindau had said, I should have known what would have come of it, and I could have advised you——"

"Would you have advised me," March demanded curiously, "to submit to bullying like that, and meekly consent to commit an act of cruelty against a man who had once been such a friend to me?"

"It was an unlucky day when you met him. I suppose we shall have to go. And just when we had got used to New York, and begun to like it. I don't know where we shall go now; Boston isn't like home any more; and we couldn't live on two thousand there; I should be ashamed to try. I'm sure I don't know where we *can* live on it. I suppose in some country village, where there are no schools, or anything for the children. I don't know what they'll say when we tell them, poor things."

Every word was a stab in March's heart, so weakly tender to his own; his wife's tears, after so much experience of the comparative lightness of the griefs that weep themselves out in women, always seemed wrung from his own soul; if his children suffered in the least through him, he felt like a murderer. It was far worse than he could have imagined, the way his wife took the affair, though he had imagined certain words, or perhaps only looks, from her that were bad enough. He had allowed for trouble, but trouble on *his* account: a sympathy that might

burden and embarrass him ; but he had not dreamt of this merely domestic, this petty, this sordid view of their potential calamity, which left him wholly out of the question, and embraced only what was most crushing and desolating in the prospect. He could not bear it. He caught up his hat again, and with some hope that his wife would try to keep him, rushed out of the house. He wandered aimlessly about, thinking the same exhausting thoughts over and over, till he found himself horribly hungry ; then he went into a restaurant for his lunch, and when he paid, he tried to imagine how he should feel if that were really his last dollar.

He went home toward the middle of the afternoon, busily hoping that Fulkerson had sent him some conciliatory message, or perhaps was waiting there for him to talk it over ; March was quite willing to talk it over now. But it was his wife who again met him at the door, though it seemed another woman than the one he had left weeping in the morning.

"I told the children," she said, in smiling explanation of his absence from lunch, "that perhaps you were detained by business. I didn't know but you had gone back to the office."

"Did you think I would go back there, Isabel ?" asked March, with a haggard look. "Well, if you say so, I will go back, and do what Dryfoos ordered me to do. I'm sufficiently cowed between him and you, I can assure you."

"Nonsense," she said. "I approve of everything you did. But sit down, now, and don't keep walk-

ing that way, and let me see if I understand it perfectly. Of course I had to have my say out."

She made him go all over his talk with Dryfoos again, and report his own language precisely. From time to time, as she got his points, she said, "That was splendid," "Good enough for him!" And "Oh, I'm so *glad* you said that to him!" At the end she said, "Well, now, let's look at it from his point of view. Let's be perfectly just to him before we take another step forward."

"Or backward," March suggested ruefully. "The case is simply this: he owns the magazine."

"Of course."

"And he has a right to expect that I will consider his pecuniary interests——"

"Oh, those detestable pecuniary interests! Don't you wish there wasn't any money in the world?"

"Yes; or else that there was a great deal more of it.—And I was perfectly willing to do that. I have always kept that in mind as one of my duties to him, ever since I understood what his relation to the magazine was."

"Yes, I can bear witness to that in any court of justice. You've done it a great deal more than I could, Basil. And it was just the same way with those horrible insurance people."

"I know," March went on, trying to be proof against her flatteries, or at least to look as if he did not deserve praise; "I know that what Lindan said was offensive to him, and I can understand how he felt that he had a right to punish it. All I say is that he had no right to punish it through me."

"Yes," said Mrs. March askingly.

"If it had been a question of making *Every Other Week* the vehicle of Lindau's peculiar opinions—though they're not so very peculiar; he might have got the most of them out of Ruskin—I shouldn't have had any ground to stand on, or at least then I should have had to ask myself whether his opinions would be injurious to the magazine or not."

"I don't see," Mrs. March interpolated, "how they could hurt it much worse than Colonel Woodburn's article crying up slavery."

"Well," said March impartially, "we could print a dozen articles praising the slavery it's impossible to have back, and it wouldn't hurt us. But if we printed one paper against the slavery which Lindau claims still exists, some people would call us bad names, and the counting-room would begin to feel it. But that isn't the point. Lindau's connection with *Every Other Week* is almost purely mechanical; he's merely a translator of such stories and sketches as he first submits to me, and it isn't at all a question of his opinions hurting us, but of my becoming an agent to punish him for his opinions. That is what I wouldn't do; that's what I never will do."

"If you did," said his wife, "I should perfectly despise you. I didn't understand how it was before. I thought you were just holding out against Dryfoos because he took a dictatorial tone with you, and because you wouldn't recognise his authority. But now I'm with you, Basil, every time, as that horrid little Fulkerson says. But who would have ever

supposed he would be so base as to side against you?"

"I don't know," said March thoughtfully, "that we had a right to expect anything else. Fulkerson's standards are low; they're merely business standards, and the good that's in him is incidental, and something quite apart from his morals and methods. He's naturally a generous and right-minded creature, but life has taught him to truckle and trick, like the rest of us."

"It hasn't taught *you* that, Basil."

"Don't be so sure. Perhaps it's only that I'm a poor scholar. But I don't know, really, that I despise Fulkerson so much for his course this morning as for his gross and fulsome flatteries of Dryfoos last night. I could hardly stomach it."

His wife made him tell her what they were, and then she said, "Yes, that was loathsome; I couldn't have believed it of Mr. Fulkerson."

"Perhaps he only did it to keep the talk going, and to give the old man a chance to say something," March leniently suggested. "It was a worse effect because he didn't or couldn't follow up Fulkerson's lead."

"It was loathsome, all the same," his wife insisted. "It's the end of Mr. Fulkerson, as far as I'm concerned."

"I didn't tell you before," March resumed, after a moment, "of my little interview with Conrad Dryfoos after his father left," and now he went on to repeat what had passed between him and the young man.

"I suspect that he and his father had been having some words before the old man came up to talk with me, and that it was that made him so furious."

"Yes, but what a strange position for the son of such a man to take! Do you suppose he says such things to his father?"

"I don't know; but I suspect that in his meek way Conrad would say what he believed to anybody. I suppose we must regard him as a kind of crank."

"Poor young fellow! He always makes me feel sad somehow. He has such a pathetic face. I don't believe I ever saw him look quite happy, except that night at Mrs. Horn's, when he was talking with Miss Vance; and then he made me feel sadder than ever."

"I don't envy him the life he leads at home, with those convictions of his. I don't see why it wouldn't be as tolerable there for old Lindau himself."

"Well, now," said Mrs. March, "let us put them all out of our minds and see what we are going to do ourselves."

They began to consider their ways and means, and how and where they should live, in view of March's severance of his relations with *Every Other Week*. They had not saved anything from the first year's salary; they had only prepared to save; and they had nothing solid but their two thousand to count upon. But they built a future in which they easily lived on that and on what March earned with his pen. He became a free lance, and fought in whatever cause he thought just; he had no ties, no chains. They went back to Boston with the

heroic will to do what was most distasteful ; they would have returned to their own house if they had not rented it again ; but, any rate, Mrs. March helped out by taking boarders, or perhaps only letting rooms to lodgers. They had some hard struggles, but they succeeded.

"The great thing," she said, "is to be right. I'm ten times as happy as if you had come home and told me that you had consented to do what Dryfoos asked, and he had doubled your salary."

"I don't think that would have happened in any event," said March dryly.

"Well, no matter. I just used it for an example."

They both experienced a buoyant relief, such as seems to come to people who begin life anew on whatever terms. "I hope we are young enough *yet*, Basil," she said, and she would not have it when he said they had once been younger.

They heard the children's knock on the door ; they knocked when they came home from school so that their mother might let them in. "Shall we tell them at once?" she asked, and ran to open for them before March could answer.

They were not alone. Fulkerson, smiling from ear to ear, was with them. "Is March in?" he asked.

"Mr. March is at home, yes," she said very haughtily. "He's in his study," and she led the way there, while the children went to their rooms.

"Well, March," Fulkerson called out at sight of him, "it's all right! The old man has come down."

"I suppose if you gentlemen are going to talk business——" Mrs. March began.

"Oh, we don't want you to go away," said Fulkerson. "I reckon March has told you, anyway."

"Yes, I've told her," said March. "Don't go, Isabel. What do you mean, Fulkerson?"

"He's just gone on up home, and he sent me round with his apologies. He sees now that he had no business to speak to you as he did, and he withdraws everything. He'd 'a' come round himself if I'd said so, but I told him I could make it all right."

Fulkerson looked so happy in having the whole affair put right, and the Marches knew him to be so kindly affected toward them that they could not refuse for the moment to share his mood. They felt themselves slipping down from the moral height which they had gained, and March made a clutch to stay himself with the question, "And Lindau?"

"Well," said Fulkerson, "he's going to leave Lindau to me. You won't have anything to do with it. I'll let the old fellow down easy."

"Do you mean," asked March, "that Mr. Dryfoos insists on his being dismissed?"

"Why, there isn't any dismissing about it," Fulkerson argued. "If you don't send him any more work, he won't do any more, that's all. Or if he comes round you can—— He's to be referred to me."

March shook his head, and his wife, with a sigh, felt herself plucked up from the soft circumstance of their lives, which she had sunk back into so quickly, and set beside him on that cold peak of principle

again. "It won't do, Fulkerson. It's very good of you and all that, but it comes to the same thing in the end. I could have gone on without any apology from Mr. Dryfoos; he transcended his authority, but that's a minor matter. I could have excused it to his ignorance of life among gentlemen; but I can't consent to Lindau's dismissal—it comes to that, whether you do it or I do it, and whether it's a positive or a negative thing—because he holds this opinion or that."

"But don't you see," said Fulkerson, "that it's just Lindau's opinions the old man can't stand? He hasn't got anything against him personally. I don't suppose there's anybody that appreciates Lindau in some ways more than the old man does."

"I understand. He wants to punish him for his opinions. Well, I can't consent to that, directly or indirectly. We don't print his opinions, and he has a perfect right to hold them, whether Mr. Dryfoos agrees with them or not."

Mrs. March had judged it decorous for her to say nothing, but she now went and sat down in the chair next her husband.

"Ah, dog on it!" cried Fulkerson, rumpling his hair with both his hands. "What am I to do? The old man says he's got to go."

"And I don't consent to his going," said March.

"And you won't stay if he goes?"

"I won't stay if he goes."

Fulkerson rose. "Well, well! I've got to see about it. I'm afraid the old man won't stand it,

March ; I am, indeed. I wish you'd reconsider. I—I'd take it as a personal favour if you would. It leaves me in a fix. You see I've got to side with one or the other."

March made no reply to this, except to say, "Yes, you must stand by him, or you must stand by me."

"Well, well! Hold on a while! I'll see you in the morning. Don't take any steps——"

"Oh, there are no steps to take," said March, with a melancholy smile. "The steps are stopped; that's all." He sank back into his chair when Fulkerson was gone, and drew a long breath. "This is pretty rough. I thought we had got through it."

"No," said his wife. "It seems as if I had to make the fight all over again."

"Well, it's a good thing it's a holy war."

"I can't bear the suspense. Why didn't you tell him outright you wouldn't go back on any terms?"

"I might as well, and got the glory. He'll never move Dryfoos. I suppose we both would like to go back, if we could."

"Oh, I suppose so."

They could not regain their lost exaltation, their lost dignity. At dinner Mrs. March asked the children how they would like to go back to Boston to live.

"Why, we're not going, are we?" asked Tom without enthusiasm.

"I was just wondering how you felt about it, now," she said, with an underlook at her husband.

"Well, if we go back," said Bella, "I want to

live on the Back Bay. It's awfully Micky at the South End."

"I suppose I should go to Harvard," said Tom, "and I'd room out at Cambridge. It would be easier to get at you on the Back Bay."

The parents smiled ruefully at each other, and in view of these grand expectations of his children, March resolved to go as far as he could in meeting Dryfoos's wishes. He proposed the theatre as a distraction from the anxieties that he knew were pressing equally on his wife. "We might go to the Old Homestead," he suggested, with a sad irony, which only his wife felt.

"Oh yes, let's!" cried Bella.

While they were getting ready, some one rang, and Bella went to the door, and then came to tell her father that it was Mr. Lindan. "He says he wants to see you just a moment. He's in the parlour, and he won't sit down, or anything."

"What can he want?" groaned Mrs. March, from their common dismay.

March apprehended a storm in the old man's face. But he only stood in the middle of the room, looking very sad and grave. "You are coing oudt," he said. "I won't geep you long. I haf come to pring pack dose macassines, and dis mawney. I can't do any more voark for you; and I can't geep the mawney you haf baid me a'ready. It iss not hawnest mawney—that hass been oarned py voark; it iss mawney that hass peen *male* py sbeculation, and the obbression off lapour, and the necessity of the boor,

py a man——. Here it is, efery tollar, efery zent. Dake it; I feel as if dere vas ploodt on it.”

“Why, Lindan,” March began, but the old man interrupted him.

“Ton’t dalk to me, Passil! I could not haf believedt it of you. When you know how I feel about dose tings, why tidn’t you dell me *whose* mawney you bay oudt to me? Ach, I ton’t plame you—I ton’t rebroach you. You haf nefer thought of it; boat I—I have thought, and I should be cuilty, I must share that man’s cuilt, if I gept hiss mawney. If you hat toldt me at the peginning—if you hat peen frank with me—boat it iss all right; you can go on; you ton’t see dese tings as I see them; and you haf cot a family, and I am a free man. I voark to myself, and when I don’t voark, I sdarfe to myself. But I geep my handts glean, voark or sdarfe. Gif him hiss mawney pack! I am sawry for him; I would not hoart hiss feelings, boat I could not pear to douch him, and hiss mawney iss like boison!”

March tried to reason with Lindan, to show him the folly, the injustice, the absurdity of his course; it ended in their both getting angry, and in Lindan’s going away in a whirl of German that included Basil in the guilt of the man whom Lindan called his master.

“Well,” said Mrs. March. “He is a crank, and I think you’re well rid of him. Now you have no quarrel with that horrid old Dryfoos, and you can keep right on.”

"Yes," said March, "I wish it didn't make me feel so sneaking. What a long day it's been! It seems like a century since I got up."

"Yes, a thousand years. Is there anything else left to happen?"

"I hope not. I'd like to go to bed."

"Why, aren't you going to the theatre?" wailed Bella, coming in upon her father's desperate expression.

"The theatre? Oh yes, certainly! I meant after we got home," and March amused himself at the puzzled countenance of the child. "Come on! Is Tom ready?"

VIII.

FULKERSON parted with the Marches in such trouble of mind that he did not feel able to meet that night the people whom he usually kept so gay at Mrs. Leighton's table. He went to Maroni's for his dinner, for this reason, and for others more obscure. He could not expect to do anything more with Dryfoos at once; he knew that Dryfoos must feel that he had already made an extreme concession to March, and he believed that if he was to get anything more from him it must be after Dryfoos had dined. But he was not without the hope, vague and indefinite as it might be, that he should find Lindau at Maroni's, and perhaps should get some concession from him, some word of regret or apology which he could report to Dryfoos, and at least make the means of reopening the affair with him; perhaps Lindau, when he knew how matters stood, would back down altogether, and for March's sake would withdraw from all connection with *Every Other Week*: himself, and so leave everything serene. Fulkerson felt capable, in his desperation, of delicately suggesting such a course to Lindau, or even of plainly advising it: he did not care for Lindau a great

deal, and he did care a great deal for the magazine.

But he did not find Lindau at Maroni's; he only found Beaton. He sat looking at the doorway as Fulkerson entered, and Fulkerson naturally came and took a place at his table. Something in Beaton's large-eyed solemnity of aspect invited Fulkerson to confidence, and he said, as he pulled his napkin open and strung it, still a little damp (as the scanty, often-washed linen at Maroni's was apt to be), across his knees, "I was looking for you this morning, to talk with you about the Christmas number, and I was a good deal worked up because I couldn't find you; but I guess I might as well have spared myself my emotions."

"Why?" asked Beaton briefly.

"Well, I don't know as there's going to be any Christmas number."

"Why?" Beaton asked again.

"Row between the financial angel and the literary editor about the chief translator and polyglot smeller."

"Lindau?"

"Lindau is his name."

"What does the literary editor expect after Lindau's expression of his views last night?"

"I don't know what he expected, but the ground he took with the old man was that as Lindau's opinions didn't characterise his work on the magazine he would not be made the instrument of punishing him for them: the old man wanted him turned off, as he calls it."

"Seems to be pretty good ground," said Beaton impartially, while he speculated, with a dull trouble at heart, on the effect the row would have on his own fortunes. His late visit home had made him feel that the claim of his family upon him for some repayment of help given could not be much longer delayed; with his mother sick and his father growing old, he must begin to do something for them, but up to this time he had spent his salary even faster than he had earned it: when Fulkerson came in he was wondering whether he could get him to increase it, if he threatened to give up his work, and he wished that he was enough in love with Margaret Vance, or even Christine Dryfoos, to marry her, only to end in the sorrowful conviction that he was really in love with Alma Leighton, who had no money, and who had apparently no wish to be married for love, even. "And what are you going to do about it?" he asked listlessly.

"Be dogged if I know *what* I'm going to do about it," said Fulkerson. "I've been round all day, trying to pick up the pieces—row began right after breakfast this morning—and one time I thought I'd got the thing all put together again. I got the old man to say that he had spoken to March a little too authoritatively about Lindau; that in fact he ought to have communicated his wishes through me; and that he was willing to have me get rid of Lindau, and March needn't have anything to do with it. I thought that was pretty white, but March says the apologies and regrets are all well enough in their

way, but they leave the main question where they found it."

"What is the main question?" Beaton asked, pouring himself out some Chianti: as he set the flask down he made the reflection that if he would drink water instead of Chianti he could send his father three dollars a week, on his back debts, and he resolved to do it.

"The main question, as March looks at it, is the question of punishing Lindau for his private opinions; he says that if he consents to *my* bouncing the old fellow it's the same as if *he* bounced him."

"It might have that complexion in some lights," said Beaton. He drank off his Chianti, and thought he would have it twice a week, or make Maroni keep the half-bottles over for him, and send his father two dollars. "And what are you going to do now?"

"That's what I don't know," said Fulkerson ruefully. After a moment he said desperately, "Beaton, you've got a pretty good head; why don't you suggest something?"

"Why don't you let March go?" Beaton suggested.

"Ah, I couldn't," said Fulkerson. "I got him to break-up in Boston and come here; I like him; nobody else could get the hang of the thing like he has; he's—a friend." Fulkerson said this with the nearest approach he could make to seriousness, which was a kind of unhappiness.

Beaton shrugged. "Oh, if you can afford to have deals, I congratulate you. They're too expensive for *me*. Then, suppose you get rid of Dryfoos?"

Fulkerson laughed forlornly. "Go on, Bildad. Like to sprinkle a few ashes over my boils? Don't mind *me*!"

They both sat silent a little while, and then Beaton said, "I suppose you haven't seen Dryfoos the second time?"

"No. I came in here to gird up my loins with a little dinner before I tackled him. But something seems to be the matter with Maroni's cook. I don't want anything to eat."

"The cooking's about as bad as usual," said Beaton. After a moment, he added ironically, for he found Fulkerson's misery a kind of relief from his own, and was willing to protract it as long as it was amusing: "Why not try an envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary?"

"What do you mean?"

"Get that other old fool to go to Dryfoos for you!"

"Which other old fool? The old fools seem to be as thick as flies."

"That Southern one."

"Colonel Woodburn?"

"Mmmmm."

"He *did* seem to rather take to the colonel!" Fulkerson mused aloud.

"Of course he did. Woodburn, with his idiotic talk about patriarchal slavery, is the man on horse-back to Dryfoos's muddled imagination. He'd listen to him abjectly, and he'd do whatever Woodburn told him to do." Beaton smiled cynically.

Fulkerson got up and reached for his coat and

hat. "You've struck it, old man." The waiter came up to help him on with his coat; Fulkerson slipped a dollar in his hand. "Never mind the coat; you can give the rest of my dinner to the poor, Paolo. Beaton, shake! You've saved my life, little boy, though I don't think you meant it." He took Beaton's hand and solemnly pressed it, and then almost ran out of the door.

They had just reached coffee at Mrs. Leighton's when he arrived, and sat down with them, and began to put some of the life of his new hope into them. His appetite revived, and after protesting that he would not take anything but coffee, he went back and ate some of the earlier courses. But with the pressure of his purpose driving him forward, he did not conceal from Miss Woodburn, at least, that he was eager to get her apart from the rest for some reason. When he accomplished this, it seemed as if he had contrived it all himself, but perhaps he had not wholly contrived it.

"I'm so glad to get a chance to speak to you alone," he said at once; and while she waited for the next word he made a pause, and then said desperately, "I want you to help me; and if you can't help me, there's no help for me."

"Mah goodness," she said, "is the case so bad as that? What in the world is the trouble?"

"Yes, it's a bad case," said Fulkerson. "I want your father to help me."

"Oh, I thoat you said *me*!"

"Yes; I want you to help me with your father.

I suppose I ought to go to him at once, but I'm a little afraid of him."

"And you awe not afraid of *me*? I don't think that's very flattering, Mr. Fulkerson. You ought to think Ah'm twaltee as awful as papa."

"Oh, I do! You see, I'm quite paralysed before you, and so I don't feel anything."

"Well, it's a pretty lahvely kyand of paralysis. But—go on."

"I will—I will. If I can only begin."

"Pohaps Ah maght begin fo' you."

"No, you can't. Lord knows, I'd like to let you. Well, it's like this."

Fulkerson made a clutch at his hair, and then, after another hesitation, he abruptly laid the whole affair before her. He did not think it necessary to state the exact nature of the offence Lindau had given Dryfoos, for he doubted if she could grasp it, and he was profuse of his excuses for troubling her with the matter, and of wonder at himself for having done so. In the rapture of his concern at having perhaps made a fool of himself, he forgot why he had told her; but she seemed to like having been confided in, and she said, "Well, Ah don't see what you can do with you' ahdeals of friendship, except stand bah' Mr. Maweh."

"My ideals of friendship? What do you mean?"

"Oh, don't you suppose we know? Mr. Beaton said you we' a pofect Bahyard in friendship, and you would sacrifice anything to it."

"Is that so?" said Fulkerson, thinking how easily

he could sacrifice Lindau in this case. He had never supposed before that he was so chivalrous in such matters, but he now began to see it in that light, and he wondered that he could ever have entertained for a moment the idea of throwing March over.

"But, Ah most *say*," Miss Woodburn went on, "Ah don't envy you you' next interview with Mr. Dryfoos. Ah suppose you'll have to see him at once aboat it."

The conjecture recalled Fulkerson to the object of his confidences. "Ah, there's where your help comes in. I've exhausted all the influence *I* have with Dryfoos——"

"Good gracious, you don't expect *Ah* could have any!"

They both laughed at the comic dismay with which she conveyed the preposterous notion; and Fulkerson said, "If I judged from myself, I should expect you to bring him round instantly."

"Oh, *thank* you, Mr. Fulkerson," she said, with mock-meekness.

"Not at all. But it isn't Dryfoos I want you to help me with; it's your father. I want your father to interview Dryfoos for me, and I—I'm afraid to ask him."

"Poo' Mr. Fulkerson!" she said, and she insinuated something through her burlesque compassion that lifted him to the skies. He swore in his heart that the woman never lived who was so witty, so wise, so beautiful, and so good. "Come raght with me this minute, if the cyoast's clea'." She

went to the door of the dining-room and looked in across its gloom to the little gallery where her father sat beside a lamp reading his evening paper; Mrs. Leighton could be heard in colloquy with the cook below, and Alma had gone to her room. She beckoned Fulkerson with the hand outstretched behind her, and said, "Go and ask him."

"Alone!" he palpitated.

"Oh, what a cyowahd!" she cried, and went with him. "Ah suppose you'll want me to tell him about it."

"Well, I wish you'd begin, Miss Woodburn," he said. "The fact is, you know, I've been over it so much I'm kind of sick of the thing."

Miss Woodburn advanced, and put her hand on her father's shoulder. "Look heah, papa! Mr. Fulkerson wants to ask you something, and he wants me to do it fo' him."

The colonel looked up through his glasses with the sort of ferocity elderly men sometimes have to put on in order to keep their glasses from falling off. His daughter continued:—

"He's got into an awful difficulty with his edito' and his proprieto', and he wants you to pacify them."

"I do not know whethah I understand the case exactly," said the colonel, "but Mr. Fulkerson may command me to the extent of my ability."

"You don't understand it aftah what Ah've said?" cried the girl. "Then Ah don't see but what you'll have to explain it you'self, Mr. Fulkerson."

"Well, Miss Woodburn has been so luminous

about it, colonel," said Fulkerson, glad of the joking shape she had given the affair, "that I can only throw in a little side light here and there."

The colonel listened, as Fulkerson went on, with a grave diplomatic satisfaction. He felt gratified, honoured, even, he said, by Mr. Fulkerson's appeal to him; and probably it gave him something of the high joy that an affair of honour would have brought him in the days when he had arranged for meetings between gentlemen. Next to bearing a challenge, this work of composing a difficulty must have been grateful. But he gave no outward sign of his satisfaction in making a *résumé* of the case so as to get the points clearly in his mind.

"I was afraid, sir," he said, with the state due to the serious nature of the facts, "that Mr. Lindau had given Mr. Dryfoos offence by some of his questions at the dinner-table last night."

"Perfect red rag to a bull," Fulkerson put in; and then he wanted to withdraw his words at the colonel's look of displeasure.

"I have no reflections to make upon Mr. Lindau," Colonel Woodburn continued, and Fulkerson felt grateful to him for going on; "I do not agree with Mr. Lindau; I totally disagree with him on sociological points; but the course of the conversation had invited him to the expression of his convictions, and he had a right to express them, so far as they had no personal bearing."

"Of course," said Fulkerson, while Miss Woodburn perched on the arm of her father's chair.

"At the same time, sir, I think that if Mr. Dryfoos felt a personal censure in Mr. Lindau's questions concerning his suppression of the strike among his workmen, he had a right to resent it."

"Exactly," Fulkerson assented.

"But it must be evident to you, sir, that a high-spirited gentleman like Mr. March—I confess that my feelings are with him very warmly in the matter—could not submit to dictation of the nature you describe."

"Yes, I see," said Fulkerson; and with that strange duplex action of the human mind, he wished that it was *his* hair, and not her father's, that Miss Woodburn was poking apart with the corner of her fan.

"Mr. Lindau," the colonel concluded, "was right from his point of view, and Mr. Dryfoos was equally right. The position of Mr. March is perfectly correct——"

His daughter dropped to her feet from his chair arm. "Mah goodness! If nobody's in the wrong, ho' awe you evah going to get the mattah straight?"

"Yes, you see," Fulkerson added, "nobody can give in."

"Pardon me," said the colonel, "the case is one in which all can give in."

"I don't know which'll begin," said Fulkerson.

The colonel rose. "Mr. Lindau must begin, sir. *We* must begin by seeing Mr. Lindau, and securing from him the assurance that in the expression of his peculiar views he had no intention of offering any

personal offence to Mr. Dryfoos. If I have formed a correct estimate of Mr. Lindau, this will be perfectly simple."

Fulkerson shook his head. "But it wouldn't help. Dryfoos don't care a rap whether Lindau meant any personal offence or not. As far as that is concerned, he's got a hide like a hippopotamus. But what he hates is Lindau's opinions, and what he says is that no man who holds such opinions shall have any work from him. And what March says is that no man shall be punished through him for his opinions, he don't care what they are."

The colonel stood a moment in silence. "And what do you expect me to do under the circumstances?"

"I came to you for advice—I thought you might suggest——"

"Do you wish me to see Mr. Dryfoos?"

"Well, that's about the size of it," Fulkerson admitted. "You see, colonel," he hastened on, "I know that you have a great deal of influence with him; that article of yours is about the only thing he's ever read in *Every Other Week*, and he's proud of your acquaintance. Well, you know," and here Fulkerson brought in the figure that struck him so much in Beaton's phrase, and had been on his tongue ever since, "you're the man on horseback to him; and he'd be more apt to do what you say than if anybody else said it."

"You are very good, sir," said the colonel, trying to be proof against the flattery, "but I am afraid

you overrate my influence." Fulkerson let him ponder it silently, and his daughter governed her impatience by holding her fan against her lips. Whatever the process was in the colonel's mind, he said at last: "I see no good reason for declining to act for you, Mr. Fulkerson, and I shall be very happy if I can be of service to you. But"—he stopped Fulkerson from cutting in with precipitate thanks—"I think I have a right, sir, to ask what your course will be in the event of failure?"

"Failure?" Fulkerson repeated, in dismay.

"Yes, sir. I will not conceal from you that this mission is one not wholly agreeable to my feelings."

"Oh, I understand that, colonel, and I assure you that I appreciate, I——"

"There is no use trying to blink the fact, sir, that there are certain aspects of Mr. Dryfoos's character in which he is not a gentleman. We have alluded to this fact before, and I need not dwell upon it now. I may say, however, that my misgivings were not wholly removed last night."

"No," Fulkerson assented; though in his heart he thought the old man had behaved very well.

"What I wish to say now is that I cannot consent to act for you, in this matter, merely as an intermediary whose failure would leave the affair *in statu quo*."

"I see," said Fulkerson.

"And I should like some intimation, some assurance, as to which party your own feelings are with in the difference."

The colonel bent his eyes sharply on Fulkerson ; Miss Woodburn let hers fall ; Fulkerson felt that he was being tested, and he said, to gain time, "As between Lindau and Dryfoos?" though he knew this was not the point.

"As between Mr. Dryfoos and Mr. March," said the colonel.

Fulkerson drew a long breath, and took his courage in both hands. "There can't be any choice for me in such a case. I'm for March, every time."

The colonel seized his hand, and Miss Woodburn said, "If there had been any choice fo' you in such a case, I should never have let papa sti' a step with you."

"Why, in regard to that," said the colonel, with a literal application of the idea, "was it your intention that we should both go?"

"Well, I don't know ; I suppose it was."

"I think it will be better for me to go alone," said the colonel ; and, with a colour from his experience in affairs of honour, he added : "In these matters a principal cannot appear without compromising his dignity. I believe I have all the points clearly in mind, and I think I should act more freely in meeting Mr. Dryfoos alone."

Fulkerson tried to hide the eagerness with which he met these agreeable views. He felt himself exalted in some sort to the level of the colonel's sentiments, though it would not be easy to say whether this was through the desperation bred of having committed himself to March's side, or through the

buoyant hope he had that the colonel would succeed in his mission. "I'm not afraid to talk with Dryfoos about it," he said.

"There is no question of courage," said the colonel. "It is a question of dignity—of personal dignity."

"Well, don't let that delay you, papa," said his daughter, following him to the door, where she found him his hat, and Fulkerson helped him on with his overcoat. "Ah shall be jost wald to know ho' it's toned oat."

"Won't you let me go up to the house with you?" Fulkerson began. "I needn't go in——"

"I prefer to go alone," said the colonel. "I wish to turn the points over in my mind, and I am afraid you would find me rather dull company."

He went out, and Fulkerson returned with Miss Woodburn to the drawing-room, where she said the Leightons were. They were not there, but she did not seem disappointed.

"Well, Mr. Fulkerson," she said, "you *have* got an ahdeal of friendship, su' enough."

"Me?" said Fulkerson. "Oh, my Lord! Don't you see I couldn't do anything else? And I'm scared half to death, anyway. If the colonel don't bring the old man round, I reckon it's all up with me. But he'll fetch him. And I'm just prostrated with gratitude to you, Miss Woodburn."

She waved his thanks aside with her fan. "What do you mean by its being all up with you?"

"Why, if the old man sticks to his position, and

I stick to March, we've both got to go overboard together. Dryfoos owns the magazine; he can stop it, or he can stop us, which amounts to the same thing, as far as we're concerned."

"And then what?" the girl pursued.

"And then, nothing—till we pick ourselves up."

"Do you mean that Mr. Dryfoos will put you both out of your places?"

"He may."

"And Mr. Maweh takes the risk of that jost fo' a principle?"

"I reckon."

"And you do it, jost fo' an ahdeal?"

"It won't do to own it. I must have my little axe to grind, somewhere."

"Well, men *ave* splendid," sighed the girl. "Ah will *say* it."

"Oh, they're not so much better than women," said Fulkerson, with a nervous jocosity. "I guess March would have backed down if it hadn't been for his wife. She was as hot as pepper about it, and you could see that she would have sacrificed all her husband's relations sooner than let him back down an inch from the stand he had taken. It's pretty easy for a man to stick to a principle if he has a woman to stand by him. But when you come to play it alone——"

"Mr. Fulkerson," said the girl solemnly, "*Ah* will stand bah you in this, if all the wold tones against you." The tears came into her eyes, and she put out her hand to him.

"You *will*?" he shouted, in a rapture. "In every way—and always—as long as you live? Do you mean it?" He had caught her hand to his breast and was grappling it tight there, and drawing her to him.

The changing emotions chased each other through her heart and over her face: dismay, shame, pride, tenderness. "You don't *believe*," she said hoarsely, "that I meant *that*?"

"No, but I hope you *do* mean it; for if you don't, nothing else means anything."

There was no space, there was only a point of wavering. "Ah *do* mean it."

When they lifted their eyes from each other again it was half-past ten. "No' you most go," she said.

"But the colonel—our fate?"

"The co'nel is often oat late, and Ah'm not afraid of any fate, no' that we've taken it into ouah own hands." She looked at him with dewy eyes of trust, of inspiration.

"Oh, it's going to come out all right," he said. "It can't come out wrong now, no matter what happens. But who'd have thought it, when I came into this house, in such a state of sin and misery, half an hour ago——"

"Three houahs and a half ago!" she said. "No' you most jost go. Ah'm taked to death. Good night. You can come in the mawning to see—papa." She opened the door, and pushed him out with enrapturing violence, and he ran laughing down the steps into her father's arms.

"Why, colonel! I was just going up to meet you." He really thought he would walk off his exultation in that direction.

"I am very sorry to say, Mr. Fulkerson," the colonel began gravely, "that Mr. Dryfoos adheres to his position."

"Oh, all right," said Fulkerson, with unabated joy. "It's what I expected. Well, my course is clear; I shall stand by March, and I guess the world won't come to an end if he bounces us both. But I'm everlasting obliged to *you*, Colonel Woodburn, and I don't know what to say to you. I—I won't detain you now; it's so late. I'll see you in the morning. Good ni——"

Fulkerson did not realise that it takes two to part. The colonel laid hold of his arm and turned away with him. "I will walk toward your place with you. I can understand why you should be anxious to know the particulars of my interview with Mr. Dryfoos;" and in the statement which followed he did not spare him the smallest. It outlasted their walk, and detained them long on the steps of the *Every Other Week* building. But at the end, Fulkerson let himself in with his key as light of heart as if he had been listening to the gayest promises that fortune could make.

By the time he met March at the office next morning, a little, but only a very little, misgiving saddened his golden heaven. He took March's hand with high courage, and said, "Well, the old man sticks to his point, March." He added, with the

sense of saying it before Miss Woodburn, "And *I* stick by *you*. I've thought it all over, and I'd rather be right with you than wrong with him."

"Well, I appreciate your motive, Fulkerson," said March. "But perhaps—perhaps we can save over our heroics for another occasion. Lindau seems to have got in with his, for the present."

He told him of Lindau's last visit, and they stood a moment looking at each other rather queerly. Fulkerson was the first to recover his spirits. "Well," he said cheerily, "that let's us out."

"Does it? I'm not sure it lets *me* out," said March; but he said this in tribute to his crippled self-respect rather than as a forecast of any action in the matter.

"Why, what are you going to do?" Fulkerson asked. "If Lindau won't work for Dryfoos you can't make him."

March sighed. "What are you going to do with this money?" He glanced at the heap of bills he had flung on the table between them.

Fulkerson scratched his head. "Ah, dogged if *I* know. Can't we give it to the deserving poor, somehow, if we can find 'em?"

"I suppose we've no right to use it in any way. You must give it to Dryfoos."

"To the deserving rich? Well, you can always find *them*. I reckon you don't want to appear in the transaction; *I* don't, either; but I guess I must." Fulkerson gathered up the money and carried it to Conrad. He directed him to account

for it in his books as conscience-money, and he enjoyed the joke more than Conrad seemed to do when he was told where it came from.

Fulkerson was able to wear off the disagreeable impression the affair left during the course of the forenoon, and he met Miss Woodburn with all a lover's buoyancy when he went to lunch. She was as happy as he when he told her how fortunately the whole thing had ended, and he took her view that it was a reward of his courage in having dared the worst. They both felt, as the newly plighted always do, that they were in the best relations with the beneficent powers, and that their felicity had been especially looked to in the disposition of events. They were in a glow of rapturous content with themselves and radiant worship of each other; she was sure that he merited the bright future opening to them both, as much as if he owed it directly to some noble action of his own; he felt that he was indebted for the favour of Heaven entirely to the still incredible accident of her preference of him over other men.

Colonel Woodburn, who was not yet in the secret of their love, perhaps failed for this reason to share their satisfaction with a result so unexpectedly brought about. The blessing on their hopes seemed to his ignorance to involve certain sacrifices of personal feeling at which he hinted in suggesting that Dryfoos should now be asked to make some abstract concessions and acknowledgments; his daughter hastened to deny that these were at all

necessary ; and Fulkerson easily explained why. The thing was over ; what was the use of opening it up again ?

“ Perhaps none,” the colonel admitted. But he added, “ I should like the opportunity of taking Mr. Lindau’s hand in the presence of Mr. Dryfoos, and assuring him that I considered him a man of principle and a man of honour ; a gentleman, sir, whom I was proud and happy to have known.”

“ Well, Ah’ve no doabt,” said his daughter demurely, “ that you’ll have the chance some day ; and we would all lahke to join you. But at the same tahme, I think Mr. Fulkerson is well oat of it fo’ the present.”

PART FIFTH.

I.

SUPERFICIALLY, the affairs of *Every Other Week* settled into their wonted form again, and for Fulkerson they seemed thoroughly reinstated. But March had a feeling of impermanency from what had happened, mixed with a fantastic sense of shame toward Lindau. He did not sympathise with Lindau's opinions, he thought his remedy for existing evils as wildly impracticable as Colonel Woodburn's. But while he thought this, and while he could justly blame Fulkerson for Lindau's presence at Dryfoos's dinner, which his zeal had brought about in spite of March's protests, still he could not rid himself of the reproach of uncandour with Lindau. He ought to have told him frankly about the ownership of the magazine, and what manner of man the man was whose money he was taking. But he said that he never could have imagined that he was serious in his preposterous attitude in regard to a class of men who embody half the prosperity of the country; and he had moments of revolt against his own humiliation before Lindau, in which he found it

monstrous that he should return Dryfoos's money as if it had been the spoil of a robber. His wife agreed with him in these moments, and said it was a great relief not to have that tiresome old German coming about. They had to account for his absence evasively to the children, whom they could not very well tell that their father was living on money that Lindau disdained to take, even though Lindau was wrong and their father was right. This heightened Mrs. March's resentment toward both Lindau and Dryfoos, who between them had placed her husband in a false position. If anything, she resented Dryfoos's conduct more than Lindau's. He had never spoken to March about the affair since Lindau had renounced his work, or added to the apologetic messages he had sent by Fulkerson. So far as March knew, Dryfoos had been left to suppose that Lindau had simply stopped for some reason that did not personally affect him. They never spoke of him, and March was too proud to ask either Fulkerson or Conrad whether the old man knew that Lindau had returned his money. He avoided talking to Conrad, from a feeling that if he did, he should involuntarily lead him on to speak of his differences with his father. Between himself and Fulkerson, even, he was uneasily aware of a want of their old perfect friendliness. Fulkerson had finally behaved with honour and courage; but his provisional reluctance had given March the measure of Fulkerson's character in one direction, and he could not ignore the fact that it was smaller than he could have wished.

He could not make out whether Fulkerson shared his discomfort or not. It certainly wore away, even with March, as time passed, and with Fulkerson, in the bliss of his fortunate love, it was probably far more transient, if it existed at all. He advanced into the winter as radiantly as if to meet the spring, and he said that if there were any pleasanter month of the year than November, it was December, especially when the weather was good and wet and muddy most of the time, so that you had to keep indoors a long while after you called anywhere.

Colonel Woodburn had the anxiety, in view of his daughter's engagement, when she asked his consent to it, that such a dreamer must have in regard to any reality that threatens to affect the course of his reveries. He had not perhaps taken her marriage into account, except as a remote contingency ; and certainly Fulkerson was not the kind of son-in-law that he had imagined in dealing with that abstraction. But because he had nothing of the sort definitely in mind, he could not oppose the selection of Fulkerson with success ; he really knew nothing against him, and he knew many things in his favour ; Fulkerson inspired him with the liking that every one felt for him in a measure ; he amused him, he cheered him ; and the Colonel had been so much used to leaving action of all kinds to his daughter that when he came to close quarters with the question of a son-in-law, he felt helpless to decide it, and he let her decide it, as if it were still to be decided when it was submitted to him. She

was competent to treat it in all its phases: not merely those of personal interest, but those of duty to the broken Southern past, sentimentally dear to him, and practically absurd to her. No such South as he remembered had ever existed to her knowledge, and no such civilisation as he imagined would ever exist, to her belief, anywhere. She took the world as she found it, and made the best of it. She trusted in Fulkerson; she had proved his magnanimity in a serious emergency; and in small things she was willing fearlessly to chance it with him. She was not a sentimentalist, and there was nothing fantastic in her expectations; she was a girl of good sense and right mind, and she liked the immediate practicality as well as the final honour of Fulkerson. She did not idealise him, but in the highest effect she realised him; she did him justice, and she would not have believed that she did him more than justice if she had sometimes known him to do himself less.

Their engagement was a fact to which the Leighton household adjusted itself almost as simply as the lovers themselves; Miss Woodburn told the ladies at once, and it was not a thing that Fulkerson could keep from March very long. He sent word of it to Mrs. March by her husband; and his engagement perhaps did more than anything else to confirm the confidence in him which had been shaken by his early behaviour in the Lindau episode, and not wholly restored by his tardy fidelity to March. But now she felt that a man who

wished to get married so obviously and entirely for love was full of all kinds of the best instincts, and only needed the guidance of a wife to become very noble. She interested herself intensely in balancing the respective merits of the engaged couple, and after her call upon Miss Woodburn in her new character she prided herself upon recognising the worth of some strictly Southern qualities in her, while maintaining the general average of New England superiority. She could not reconcile herself to the Virginian custom illustrated in her having been christened with the surname of Madison; and she said that its pet form of Mad, which Fulkerson promptly invented, only made it more ridiculous.

Fulkerson was slower in telling Beaton. He was afraid, somehow, of Beaton's taking the matter in the cynical way; Miss Woodburn said she would break off the engagement if Beaton was left to guess it or find it out by accident, and then Fulkerson plucked up his courage. Beaton received the news with gravity, and with a sort of melancholy meekness that strongly moved Fulkerson's sympathy, and made him wish that Beaton was engaged too.

It made Beaton feel very old; it somehow left him behind and forgotten; in a manner, it made him feel trifled with. Something of the unfriendliness of fate seemed to overcast his resentment, and he allowed the sadness of his conviction that he had not the means to marry on to tinge his recognition of the fact that Alma Leighton would not have

wanted him to marry her if he had. He was now often in that martyr mood in which he wished to help his father; not only to deny himself Chianti, but to forego a fur-lined overcoat which he intended to get for the winter. He postponed the moment of actual sacrifice as regarded the Chianti, and he bought the overcoat in an anguish of self-reproach. He wore it the first evening after he got it in going to call upon the Leightons, and it seemed to him a piece of ghastly irony when Alma complimented his picturesqueness in it, and asked him to let her sketch him.

"Oh, you can *sketch* me," he said, with so much gloom that it made her laugh.

"If you think it's so serious, I'd rather not."

"No, no! Go ahead! How do you want me?"

"Oh, fling yourself down on a chair in one of your attitudes of studied negligence; and twist one corner of your moustache with affected absence of mind."

"And you think I'm always studied, always affected?"

"I didn't *say* so."

"I didn't ask you what you *said*."

"And I won't tell you what I think."

"Ah, I know what you think."

"What made you ask, then?" The girl laughed again with the satisfaction of her sex in cornering a man.

Beaton made a show of not deigning to reply, and put himself in the pose she suggested frowning.

"Ah, that's it. But a little more animation.

"As when a great thought strikes along the brain,
And flushes all the cheek.'"

She put her forehead down on the back of her hand and laughed again. "You ought to be photographed. You look as if you were sitting for it."

Beaton said: "'That's because I know I am being photographed, in one way. I don't think you ought to call me affected. I never am so with you; I know it wouldn't be of any use."

"Oh, Mr. Beaton, you flatter."

"No, I never flatter you."

"I meant you flattered yourself."

"How?"

"Oh, I don't know. Imagine."

"I know what you mean. You think I can't be sincere with anybody."

"Oh, no I don't."

"What do you think?"

"That you can't—try." Alma gave another victorious laugh.

Miss Woodburn and Fulkerson would once have both feigned a great interest in Alma's sketching Beaton, and made it the subject of talk, in which they approached as nearly as possible the real interest of their lives. Now they frankly remained away, in the dining-room, which was very cozy after the dinner had disappeared; the colonel sat with his lamp and paper in the gallery beyond; Mrs. Leighton was about her housekeeping affairs, in the content she always felt when Alma was with Beaton.

"They seem to be having a pretty good time in there," said Fulkerson, detaching himself from his own absolute good time as well as he could.

"At least Alma does," said Miss Woodburn.

"Do you think she cares for him?"

"Qualite as moch as he desoves."

"What makes you all down on Beaton around here? He's not such a bad fellow."

"We awe not all doan on him. Mrs. Leighton isn't doan on him."

"Oh, I guess if it was the old lady, there wouldn't be much question about it."

They both laughed, and Alma said, "They seem to be greatly amused with something in there."

"Me, probably," said Beaton. "I seem to amuse everybody to-night."

"Don't you always?"

"I always amuse you, I'm afraid, Alma."

She looked at him as if she were going to snub him openly for using her name; but apparently she decided to do it covertly. "You didn't at first. I really used to believe you could be serious once."

"Couldn't you believe it again? Now?"

"Not when you put on that wind-harp stop."

"Wetmore has been talking to you about me. He would sacrifice his best friend to a phrase. He spends his time making them."

"He's made some very pretty ones about you."

"Like the one you just quoted?"

"No, not exactly. He admires you ever so much. He says——." She stopped, teasingly.

"What?"

"He says you could be almost anything you wished, if you didn't wish to be everything."

"That sounds more like the *school* of Wetmore. That's what *you* say, Alma. Well, if there were something you wished me to be, I could be it."

"We might adapt Kingsley: 'Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever.'" He could not help laughing. She went on: "I always thought that was the most patronising and exasperating thing ever addressed to a human girl; and we've had to stand a good deal in our time. I should like to have it applied to the other 'sect' a while. As if any girl that *was* a girl would be good if she had the remotest chance of being clever."

"Then you wouldn't wish me to be good?" Beaton asked.

"Not if you were a girl."

"You want to shock me. Well, I suppose I deserve it. But if I were one-tenth part as good as you are, Alma, I should have a lighter heart than I have now. I know that I'm fickle, but I'm not false, as you think I am."

"Who said I thought you were false?"

"No one," said Beaton. "It isn't necessary, when you look it—live it."

"Oh, dear! I didn't know I devoted my whole time to the subject."

"I know I'm despicable. I could tell you something—the history of this day, even—that would make you despise me." Beaton had in mind his

purchase of the overcoat, which Alma was getting in so effectively, with the money he ought to have sent his father. "But," he went on darkly, with a sense that what he was that moment suffering for his selfishness must somehow be a kind of atonement, which would finally leave him to the guiltless enjoyment of the overcoat, "you wouldn't believe the depths of baseness I could descend to."

"I would try," said Alma, rapidly shading the collar, "if you'd give me some lint."

Beaton had a sudden wish to pour out his remorse to her, but he was afraid of her laughing at him. He said to himself that this was a very wholesome fear, and that if he could always have her at hand he should not make a fool of himself so often. A man conceives of such an office as the very noblest for a woman; he worships her for it if he is magnanimous. But Beaton was silent, and Alma put back her head for the right distance on her sketch. "Mr. Fulkerson thinks you are the sublimest of human beings for advising him to get Colonel Woodburn to interview Mr. Dryfoos about Lindau. What have you ever done with your Judas?"

"I haven't done anything with it. Nadel thought he would take hold of it at one time, but he dropped it again. After all, I don't suppose it could be popularised. Fulkerson wanted to offer it as a premium to subscribers for *Every Other Week*, but I sat down on that."

Alma could not feel the absurdity of this, and she

merely said, "*Every Other Week* seems to be going on just the same as ever."

"Yes, the trouble has all blown over, I believe Fulkerson," said Beaton, with a return to what they were saying, "has managed the whole business very well. But he exaggerates the value of my advice."

"Very likely," Alma suggested vaguely. "Or no! Excuse me! He couldn't, he couldn't! She laughed delightedly at Beaton's foolish look of embarrassment.

He tried to recover his dignity in saying, "He's a very good fellow, and he deserves his happiness."

"Oh, indeed!" said Alma perversely. "Does any one deserve happiness?"

"I know I don't," sighed Beaton.

"You mean you don't get it."

"I certainly don't get it."

"Ah, but that isn't the reason."

"What is?"

"That's the secret of the universe." She bit in her lower lip, and looked at him with eyes of gleaming fun.

"Are you *never* serious?" he asked.

"With serious people—always."

"I am serious; and you have the secret of my happiness——." He threw himself impulsively forward in his chair.

"Oh, pose, pose!" she cried.

"I *won't* pose," he answered, "and you have got to listen to me. You know I'm in love with you; and I know that once you cared for me. Can't that

time—won't it—come back again? Try to think so, Alma!"

"No," she said, briefly and seriously enough.

"But that seems impossible. What is it I've done—what have you against me?"

"Nothing. But that time is *past*. I couldn't recall it if I wished. Why did you bring it up? You've broken your word. You know I wouldn't have let you keep coming here if you hadn't promised never to refer to it."

"How could I help it? With that happiness near us—Fulkerson——"

"Oh, it's *that*? I might have known it!"

"No, it isn't that—it's something far deeper. But if it's nothing you have against me, what is it, Alma, that keeps you from caring for me now as you did then? I haven't changed."

"But *I* have. I shall never care for you again, Mr. Beaton; you might as well understand it once for all. Don't think it's anything in yourself, or that I think you unworthy of me. I'm not so self-satisfied as that; I know very well that I'm not a perfect character, and that I've no claim on perfection in anybody else. I think women who want that are fools; they won't get it, and they don't deserve it. But I've learned a good deal more about myself than I knew in St. Barnaby, and a life of work, of art, and of art alone—that's what I've made up my mind to."

"A woman that's made up her mind to that has no heart to hinder her!"

"Would a man have that had done so?"

"But I don't believe you, Alma. You're merely laughing at me. And besides, with me you needn't give up art. We could work together. You know how much I admire your talent. I believe I could help it—serve it; I would be its willing slave, and yours, Heaven knows!"

"I don't want any slave—nor any slavery. I want to be free—always. Now do you see? I *don't* care for you, and I never could in the old way; but I should have to care for some one more than I believe I ever shall to give up my work. Shall we go on?" She looked at her sketch.

"No, we shall not go on," he said, gloomily as he rose.

"I suppose you blame me," she said, rising too.

"Oh no! I blame no one—or only myself. I threw my chance away."

"I'm glad you see that; and I'm glad you did it. You don't believe me, of course. Why do men think life can be only the one thing to women? And if you come to the selfish view, who are the happy women? I'm sure that if work doesn't fail me, health won't, and happiness won't."

"But you could work on with me——"

"Second fiddle. Do you suppose I shouldn't be woman enough to wish my work always less and lower than yours? At least I've heart enough for that!"

"You've heart enough for anything, Alma. I was a fool to say you hadn't."

"I think the women who keep their hearts have an even chance, at least, of having heart——"

"Ah, there's where you're wrong!"

"But mine isn't mine to give *you*, anyhow. And now I don't want you ever to speak to me about this again."

"Oh, there's no danger!" he cried bitterly. "I shall never willingly see you again."

"That's as you like, Mr. Beaton. We've had to be very frank, but I don't see why we shouldn't be friends. Still, we needn't, if you don't like."

"And I may come—I may come here—as—as usual?"

"Why, if you can consistently," she said, with a smile, and she held out her hand to him.

He went home dazed, and feeling as if it were a bad joke that had been put upon him. At least the affair went so deep that it estranged the aspect of his familiar studio. Some of the things in it were not very familiar; he had spent lately a great deal on rugs, on stuffs, on Japanese bric-à-brac. When he saw these things in the shops he had felt that he must have them; that they were necessary to him; and he was partly in debt for them, still without having sent any of his earnings to pay his father. As he looked at them now he liked to fancy something weird and conscious in them as the silent witnesses of a broken life. He felt about among some of the smaller objects on the mantel for his pipe. Before he slept he was aware, in the luxury of his despair, of a remote relief, an escape; and after all,

the understanding he had come to with Alma was only the explicit formulation of terms long tacit between them. Beaton would have been puzzled more than he knew if she had taken him seriously. It was inevitable that he should declare himself in love with her ; but he was not disappointed at her rejection of his love ; perhaps not so much as he would have been at its acceptance, though he tried to think otherwise, and to give himself airs of tragedy. He did not really feel that the result was worse than what had gone before, and it left him free.

But he did not go to the Leightons again for so long a time that Mrs. Leighton asked Alma what had happened. Alma told her.

“And he won’t come any more?” her mother sighed, with reserved censure.

“Oh, I think he will. He couldn’t very well come the next night. But he has the habit of coming, and with Mr. Beaton habit is everything—even the habit of thinking he’s in love with some one.”

“Alma,” said her mother, “I don’t think it’s very nice for a girl to let a young man keep coming to see her after she’s refused him.”

“Why not, if it amuses him and doesn’t hurt the girl?”

“But it does hurt her, Alma. It—it’s indelicate. It isn’t fair to him ; it gives him hopes.”

“Well, mamma, it hasn’t happened in the given case yet. If Mr. Beaton comes again I won’t see him, and you can forbid him the house.”

"If I could only feel sure, Alma," said her mother, taking up another branch of the inquiry, "that you really knew your own mind, I should be easier about it."

"Then you can rest perfectly quiet, mamma. I do know my own mind ; and what's worse, I know Mr. Beaton's mind."

"What do you mean ?"

"I mean that he spoke to me the other night simply because Mr. Fulkerson's engagement had broken him all up."

"What expressions !" Mrs. Leighton lamented.

"He let it out himself," Alma went on. "And you wouldn't have thought it was very flattering yourself. When I'm made love to, after this, I prefer to be made love to in an off-year, when there isn't another engaged couple anywhere about."

"Did you tell him that, Alma ?"

"Tell him that ! What do you mean, mamma ? I may be indelicate, but I'm not quite so indelicate as that."

"I didn't mean you were indelicate, really, Alma, but I wanted to warn you. I think Mr. Beaton was very much in earnest."

"Oh, so did he !"

"And you didn't ?"

"Oh yes, for the time being. I suppose he's very much in earnest with Miss Vance at times, and with Miss Dryfoos at others. Sometimes he's a painter, and sometimes he's an architect, and sometimes he's a sculptor. He has too many gifts—too many tastes."

“And if Miss Vance, and Miss Dryfoos——”

“Oh, do say Sculpture and Architecture, mamma ! It’s getting so dreadfully personal !”

“Alma, you know that I only wish to get at your real feeling in the matter.”

“And you know that I don’t want to let you—especially when I haven’t got any real feeling in the matter. But I should think—speaking in the abstract entirely—that if either of those arts was ever going to be in earnest about him, it would want his exclusive devotion for a week at least.”

“I didn’t know,” said Mrs. Leighton, “that he was doing anything now at the others. I thought he was entirely taken up with his work on *Every Other Week*.”

“Oh, he is ! he is !”

“And you certainly can’t say, my dear, that he hasn’t been very kind—very useful to you, in that matter.”

“And so I ought to have said yes out of gratitude ? Thank you, mamma ! I didn’t know you held me so cheap.”

“You know whether I hold you cheap or not, Alma. I don’t want you to cheapen yourself. I don’t want you to trifle with any one. I want you to be honest with yourself.”

“Well, come now, mamma ! Suppose you begin. I’ve been perfectly honest with myself, and I’ve been honest with Mr. Beaton. I don’t care for him, and I’ve told him I didn’t ; so he may be supposed to know it. If he comes here after this, he’ll come

as a plain, unostentatious friend of the family, and it's for you to say whether he shall come in that capacity or not. I hope you won't trifle with him, and let him get the notion that he's coming on any other basis."

Mrs. Leighton felt the comfort of the critical attitude far too keenly to abandon it for anything constructive. She only said, "You know very well, Alma, that's a matter I can have nothing to do with."

"Then you leave him entirely to me?"

"I hope you will regard his right to candid and open treatment."

"He's had nothing but the most open and candid treatment from me, mamma. It's you that want to play fast and loose with him. And to tell you the truth, I believe he would like that a good deal better; I believe that if there's anything he hates, it's openness and candour."

Alma laughed, and put her arms round her mother, who could not help laughing a little too.

II.

THE winter did not renew for Christine and Mela the social opportunity which the spring had offered. After the *musical* at Mrs. Horn's, they both made their party-call, as Mela said, in due season ; but they did not find Mrs. Horn at home, and neither she nor Miss Vance came to see them after people returned to town in the fall. They tried to believe for a time that Mrs. Horn had not got their cards ; this pretence failed them, and they fell back upon their pride, or rather Christine's pride. Mela had little but her good-nature to avail her in any exigency, and if Mrs. Horn or Miss Vance had come to call after a year of neglect, she would have received them as amiably as if they had not lost a day in coming. But Christine had drawn a line, beyond which they would not have been forgiven ; and she had planned the words and the behaviour with which she would have punished them if they had appeared then. Neither sister imagined herself in anywise inferior to them ; but Christine was suspicious, at least, and it was Mela who invented the hypothesis of the lost cards. As nothing happened

to prove or to disprove the fact, she said, "I move we put Coonrod up to gittun' it out of Miss Vance, at some of their meetin's."

"If you do," said Christine, "I'll kill you."

Christine, however, had the visits of Beaton to console her, and if these seemed to have no definite aim, she was willing to rest in the pleasure they gave her vanity; but Mela had nothing. Sometimes she even wished they were all back on the farm.

"It would be the best thing for both of you," said Mrs. Dryfoos, in answer to such a burst of desperation. "I don't think New York is any place for girls."

"Well, what I hate, mother," said Mela, "is, it don't seem to be any place for young men, either." She found this so good when she had said it that she laughed over it till Christine was angry.

"A body would think there had never been any joke before."

"I don't see as it's a joke," said Mrs. Dryfoos. "It's the plain truth."

"Oh, don't mind her, mother," said Mela. "She's put out because her old Mr. Beaton ha'n't been round for a couple o' weeks. If you don't watch out, that fellow'll give you the slip, yit, Christine, after all your pains."

"Well, there ain't anybody to give *you* the slip, Mela," Christine clawed back.

"No; I ha'n't ever set my traps for anybody." This was what Mela said for want of a better retort; but it was not quite true. When Kendricks came

with Beaton to call after her father's dinner, she used all her cunning to ensnare him, and she had him to herself as long as Beaton stayed ; Dryfoos sent down word that he was not very well, and had gone to bed. The novelty of Mela had worn off for Kendricks, and she found him, as she frankly told him, not half as entertaining as he was at Mrs. Horn's ; but she did her best with him as the only flirtable material which had yet come to her hand. It would have been her ideal to have the young men stay till past midnight, and her father come downstairs in his stocking-feet, and tell them it was time to go. But they made a visit of decorous brevity, and Kendricks did not come again. She met him afterward, once, as she was crossing the pavement in Union Square, to get into her coupé, and made the most of him ; but it was necessarily very little, and so he passed out of her life without having left any trace in her heart, though Mela had a heart that she would have put at the disposition of almost any young man that wanted it. Kendricks himself, Manhattan cockney as he was, with scarcely more outlook into the average American nature than if he had been kept a prisoner in New York society all his days, perceived a property in her which forbade him as a man of conscience to trifle with her ; something earthly good and kind, if it was simple and vulgar. In revising his impressions of her, it seemed to him that she would come even to better literary effect if this were recognised in her ; and it made her sacred, in spite of her willingness to fool and to

be fooled, in her merely human quality. After all, he saw that she wished honestly to love and to be loved, and the lures she threw out to that end seemed to him pathetic rather than ridiculous ; he could not join Beaton in laughing at her ; and he did not like Beaton's laughing at the other girl, either. It seemed to Kendricks, with the code of honour which he mostly kept to himself because he was a little ashamed to find there were so few others like it, that if Beaton cared nothing for the other girl—and Christine appeared simply detestable to Kendricks—he had better keep away from her, and not give her the impression he was in love with her. He rather fancied that this was the part of a gentleman, and he could not have penetrated to that æsthetic and moral complexity which formed the consciousness of a nature like Beaton, and was chiefly a torment to itself ; he could not have conceived of the wayward impulses indulged at every moment in little things, till the straight highway was traversed and wellnigh lost under their tangle. To do whatever one likes is finally to do nothing that one likes, even though one continues to do what one will ; but Kendricks, though a sage of twenty-seven, was still too young to understand this.

Beaton scarcely understood it himself, perhaps because he was not yet twenty-seven. He only knew that his will was somehow sick ; that it spent itself in caprices, and brought him no happiness from the fulfilment of the most vehement wish. But he was aware that his wishes grew less and less

vehement ; he began to have a fear that some time he might have none at all. It seemed to him that if he could once do something that was thoroughly distasteful to himself, he might make a beginning in the right direction ; but when he tried this on a small scale it failed, and it seemed stupid. Some sort of expiation was the thing he needed, he was sure ; but he could not think of anything in particular to expiate ; a man could not expiate his temperament, and his temperament was what Beaton decided to be at fault. He perceived that it went deeper than even fate would have gone ; he could have fulfilled an evil destiny and had done with it, however terrible. His trouble was that he could not escape from himself ; and for the most part, he justified himself in refusing to try. After he had come to that distinct understanding with Alma Leighton, and experienced the relief it really gave him, he thought for a while that if it had fallen out otherwise, and she had put him in charge of her destiny, he might have been better able to manage his own. But as it was, he could only drift, and let all other things take their course. It was necessary that he should go to see her afterward, to show her that he was equal to the event ; but he did not go so often, and he went rather oftener to the Dryfooses ; it was not easy to see Margaret Vance, except on the society terms. With much sneering and scorning, he fulfilled the duties to Mrs. Horn without which he knew he should be dropped from her list ; but one might go to many of her Thursdays without getting many

words with her niece. Beaton hardly knew whether he wanted many ; the girl kept the charm of her innocent stylishness ; but latterly she wanted to talk more about social questions than about the psychical problems that young people usually debate so personally. Son of the working-people as he was, Beaton had never cared anything about such matters ; he did not know about them or wish to know ; he was perhaps too near them. Besides, there was an embarrassment, at least on her part, concerning the Dryfooses. She was too high-minded to blame him for having tempted her to her failure with them by his talk about them ; but she was conscious of avoiding them in her talk. She had decided not to renew the effort she had made in the spring ; because she could not do them good as fellow-creatures needing food and warmth and work, and she would not try to befriend them socially ; she had a horror of any such futile sentimentality. She would have liked to account to Beaton in this way for a course which she suspected he must have heard their comments upon, but she did not quite know how to do it ; she could not be sure how much or how little he cared for them. Some tentative approaches which she made toward explanation were met with such eager disclaim of personal interest that she knew less than before what to think ; and she turned the talk from the sisters to the brother, whom it seemed she still continued to meet in their common work among the poor.

“ He seems very different,” she ventured.

"Oh, quite," said Beaton. "He's the kind of person that you might suppose gave the Catholics a hint for the cloistral life; he's a cloistered nature—the nature that atones and suffers for. But he's awfully dull company, don't you think? I never can get anything out of him."

"He's very much in earnest."

"Remorselessly. We've got a profane and mundane creature there at the office who runs us all, and it's shocking merely to see the contact of the two natures. When Fulkerson gets to joking Dryfoos—he likes to put his joke in the form of a pretence that Dryfoos is actuated by a selfish motive, that he has an eye to office, and is working up a political interest for himself on the East side—it's something inexpressible."

"I should think so," said Miss Vance, with such lofty disapproval that Beaton felt himself included in it for having merely told what caused it.

He could not help saying, in natural rebellion, "Well, the man of one idea is always a little ridiculous."

"When his idea is right?" she demanded. "A right idea can't be ridiculous."

"Oh, I only said the man that held it alone. He's flat; he has no relief, no projection."

She seemed unable to answer, and he perceived that he had silenced her to his own disadvantage. It appeared to Beaton that she was becoming a little too exacting for comfort in her idealism. He put down the cup of tea he had been tasting, and said, in his solemn staccato, "I must go. Good-bye!" and

got instantly away from her, with an effect he had of having suddenly thought of something imperative.

He went up to Mrs Horn for a moment's hail and farewell, and felt himself subtly detained by her through fugitive passages of conversation with half a dozen other people. He fancied that at crises of this strange interview Mrs. Horn was about to become confidential with him, and confidential, of all things, about her niece. She ended by not having palpably been so. In fact, the concern in her mind would have been difficult to impart to a young man, and after several experiments Mrs. Horn found it impossible to say that she wished Margaret could somehow be interested in lower things than those which occupied her. She had watched with growing anxiety the girl's tendency to various kinds of self-devotion. She had dark hours in which she even feared her entire withdrawal from the world in a life of good works. Before now, girls had entered the Protestant sisterhoods, which appeal so potently to the young and generous imagination, and Margaret was of just the temperament to be influenced by them. During the past summer she had been unhappy at her separation from the cares that had engrossed her more and more as their stay in the city drew to an end in the spring, and she had hurried her aunt back to town earlier in the fall than she would have chosen to come. Margaret had her correspondents among the working-women whom she befriended. Mrs. Horn was at one time alarmed to find that Margaret was actually promoting a strike

of the button-hole workers. This, of course, had its ludicrous side, in connection with a young lady in good society, and a person of even so little humour as Mrs. Horn could not help seeing it. At the same time she could not help foreboding the worst from it; she was afraid that Margaret's health would give way under the strain, and that if she did not go into a sisterhood she would at least go into a decline. She began the winter with all such counteractive measures as she could employ. At an age when such things weary, she threw herself into the pleasures of society with the hope of dragging Margaret after her; and a sympathetic witness must have followed with compassion her course from ball to ball, from reception to reception, from parlour-reading to parlour-reading, from *musicale* to *musicale*, from play to play, from opera to opera. She tasted, after she had practically renounced them, the bitter and the insipid flavours of fashionable amusement, in the hope that Margaret might find them sweet, and now at the end she had to own to herself that she had failed. It was coming Lent again, and the girl had only grown thinner and more serious with the diversions that did not divert her from the baleful works of beneficence on which Mrs. Horn felt that she was throwing her youth away. Margaret could have borne either alone, but together they were wearing her out. She felt it a duty to undergo the pleasures her aunt appointed for her, but she could not forego the other duties in which she found her only pleasure.

She kept up her music still because she could employ it at the meetings for the entertainment, and, as she hoped, the elevation of her working-women; but she neglected the other æsthetic interests which once occupied her; and at sight of Beaton talking with her, Mrs. Horn caught at the hope that he might somehow be turned to account in reviving Margaret's former interest in art. She asked him if Mr. Wetmore had his classes that winter as usual; and she said she wished Margaret could be induced to go again: Mr. Wetmore always said that she did not draw very well, but that she had a great deal of feeling for it, and her work was interesting. She asked, were the Leightons in town again; and she murmured a regret that she had not been able to see anything of them, without explaining why; she said she had a fancy that if Margaret knew Miss Leighton, and what she was doing, it might stimulate her, perhaps. She supposed Miss Leighton was still going on with her art?

Beaton said, Oh yes, he believed so.

But his manner did not encourage Mrs. Horn to pursue her aims in that direction, and she said, with a sigh, she wished *he* still had a class; she always fancied that Margaret got more good from his instruction than from any one else's.

He said that she was very good; but there was really nobody who knew half as much as Wetmore, or could make any one understand half as much.

Mrs. Horn was afraid, she said, that Mr. Wetmore's terrible sincerity discouraged Margaret; he would

not let her have any illusions about the outcome of what she was doing; and did not Mr. Beaton think that some illusion was necessary with young people? Of course it was very nice of Mr. Wetmore to be so honest, but it did not always seem to be the wisest thing. She begged Mr. Beaton to try to think of some one who would be a little less severe. Her tone assumed a deeper interest in the people who were coming up and going away, and Beaton perceived that he was dismissed.

He went away with vanity flattered by the sense of having been appealed to concerning Margaret, and then he began to chafe at what she had said of Wetmore's honesty, apropos of her wish that he still had a class himself. Did she mean, confound her! that *he* was insincere, and would let Miss Vance suppose she had more talent than she really had? The more Beaton thought of this, the more furious he became; and the more he was convinced that something like it had been unconsciously if not consciously in her mind. He framed some keen retorts, to the general effect that with the atmosphere of illusion preserved so completely at home, Miss Vance hardly needed it in her art studies. Having just determined never to go near Mrs. Horn's Thursdays again, he decided to go once more, in order to plant this sting in her capacious but somewhat callous bosom; and he planned how he would lead the talk up to the point from which he should launch it.

In the meantime he felt the need of some present

solace, such as only unqualified worship could give him ; a cruel wish to feel his power in some direction where, even if it were resisted, it could not be overcome, drove him on. That a woman who was to Beaton the embodiment of artificiality should intimate, however innocently—the innocence made it all the worse—that he was less honest than Wetmore, whom he knew to be so much more honest, was something that must be retaliated somewhere before his self-respect could be restored. It was only five o'clock, and he went on uptown to the Dryfooses', though he had been there only the night before last. He asked for the ladies, and Mrs. Mandel received him.

"The young ladies are down-town shopping," she said, "but I am very glad of the opportunity of seeing you alone, Mr. Beaton. You know I lived several years in Europe."

"Yes," said Beaton, wondering what that could have to do with her pleasure in seeing him alone. "I believe so?" He involuntarily gave his words the questioning inflection.

"You have lived abroad, too, and so you won't find what I am going to ask so strange. Mr. Beaton, why do you come so much to this house?" Mrs. Mandel bent forward with an aspect of lady-like interest, and smiled.

Beaton frowned. "Why do I come so much?"

"Yes."

"Why do I——. Excuse me, Mrs. Mandel, but will you allow me to ask why you ask?"

"Oh, certainly. There's no reason why I

shouldn't say, for I wish you to be very frank with me. I ask because there are two young ladies in this house; and, in a certain way, I have to take the place of a mother to them. I needn't explain why; you know all the people here, and you understand. I have nothing to say about them, but I should not be speaking to you now if they were not all rather helpless people. They do not know the world they have come to live in here, and they cannot help themselves nor one another. But you do know it, Mr. Beaton, and I am sure you know just how much or how little you mean by coming here. You are either interested in one of these young girls or you are not. If you are, I have nothing more to say. If you are not——." Mrs. Mandel continued to smile, but the smile had grown more perfunctory, and it had an icy gleam.

Beaton looked at her with surprise that he gravely kept to himself. He had always regarded her as a social nullity, with a kind of pity, to be sure, as a civilised person living among such people as the Dryfooses, but not without a humorous contempt; he had thought of her as Mandel, and sometimes as old Mandel, though she was not half a score of years his senior, and was still well on the sunny side of forty. He reddened, and then turned an angry pallor. "Excuse me again, Mrs. Mandel. Do you ask this from the young ladies?"

"Certainly not," she said, with the best temper, and with something in her tone that convicted Beaton of vulgarity in putting his question of her

authority in the form of a sneer. "As I have suggested, they would hardly know how to help themselves at all in such a matter. I have no objection to saying that I ask it from the father of the young ladies. Of course, in and for myself I should have no right to know anything about your affairs. I assure you the duty of knowing isn't very pleasant." The little tremor in her clear voice struck Beaton as something rather nice.

"I can very well believe that, Mrs. Mandel," he said, with a dreamy sadness in his own. He lifted his eyes, and looked into hers. "If I told you that I cared nothing about them in the way you intimate?"

"Then I should prefer to let you characterise your own conduct in continuing to come here for the year past, as you have done, and tacitly leading them on to infer differently." They both mechanically kept up the fiction of plurality in speaking of Christine, but there was no doubt in the mind of either which of the young ladies the other meant.

A good many thoughts went through Beaton's mind, and none of them were flattering. He had not been unconscious that the part he had played toward this girl was ignoble, and that it had grown meaner as the fancy which her beauty had at first kindled in him had grown cooler. He was aware that of late he had been amusing himself with her passion in a way that was not less than cruel, not because he wished to do so, but because he was listless and wished nothing. He rose in saying, "I might be a little more lenient than you think, Mrs.

Mandel ; but I won't trouble you with any palliating theory. I will not come any more."

He bowed, and Mrs. Mandel said, "Of course, it's only your action that I am concerned with."

She seemed to him merely triumphant, and he could not conceive what it had cost her to nerve herself up to her too easy victory. He left Mrs. Mandel to a far harder lot than had fallen to him, and he went away hating her as an enemy who had humiliated him at a moment when he particularly needed exalting. It was really very simple for him to stop going to see Christine Dryfoos, but it was not at all simple for Mrs. Mandel to deal with the consequences of his not coming. He only thought how lightly she had stopped him, and the poor woman whom he had left trembling for what she had been obliged to do embodied for him the conscience that accused him of unpleasant things.

"By heavens ! this is piling it up," he said to himself through his set teeth, realising how it had happened right on top of that stupid insult from Mrs. Horn. Now he should have to give up his place on *Every Other Week* ; he could not keep that, under the circumstances, even if some pretence were not made to get rid of him ; he must hurry and anticipate any such pretence ; he must see Fulkerson at once ; he wondered where he should find him at that hour. He thought, with bitterness so real that it gave him a kind of tragical satisfaction, how certainly he could find him a little later at Mrs. Leighton's ; and Fulkerson's happiness became an added injury.

The thing had of course come about just at the wrong time. There never had been a time when Beaton needed money more ; when he had spent what he had and what he expected to have so recklessly. He was in debt to Fulkerson personally and officially for advance payments of salary. The thought of sending money home made him break into a scoffing laugh, which he turned into a cough in order to deceive the passers. What sort of face should he go to Fulkerson with and tell him that he renounced his employment on *Every Other Week* ; and what should he do when he had renounced it ? Take pupils, perhaps ; open a class ? A lurid conception of a class conducted on those principles of shameless flattery at which Mrs. Horn had hinted—he believed now she had meant to insult him—presented itself. Why should not he act upon the suggestion ? He thought—with loathing for the whole race of women-dabblers in art—how easy the thing would be : as easy as to turn back now and tell that old fool's girl that he loved her, and rake in half his millions. Why should not he do that ? No one else cared for him ; and at a year's end, probably, one woman would be like another as far as the love was concerned, and probably he should not be more tired if the woman were Christine Dryfoos than if she were Margaret Vance. He kept Alma Leighton out of the question, because at the bottom of his heart he believed that she must be for ever unlike every other woman to him.

The tide of his confused and aimless reverie had

carried him far down-town, he thought ; but when he looked up from it to see where he was, he found himself on Sixth Avenue, only a little below Thirty-ninth Street, very hot and blown ; that idiotic fur overcoat was stifling. He could not possibly walk down to Eleventh ; he did not want to walk even to the Elevated station at Thirty-fourth ; he stopped at the corner to wait for a surface-car, and fell again into his bitter fancies. After a while he roused himself and looked up the track, but there was no car coming. He found himself beside a policeman, who was lazily swinging his club by its thong from his wrist.

“When do you suppose a car will be along ?” he asked, rather in a general sarcasm of the absence of the cars than in any special belief that the policeman could tell him.

The policeman waited to discharge his tobacco juice into the gutter. “In about a week,” he said nonchalantly.

“What’s the matter ?” asked Beaton, wondering what the joke could be.

“Strike,” said the policeman. His interest in Beaton’s ignorance seemed to overcome his contempt of it. “Knocked off everywhere this morning except Third Avenue and one or two cross-town lines.” He spat again and kept his bulk at its incline over the gutter to glance at a group of men on the corner below. They were neatly dressed, and looked like something better than working men, and they had a holiday air of being in their best clothes.

"Some of the strikers?" asked Beaton.

The policeman nodded

"Any trouble yet?"

"There won't be any trouble till we begin to move the cars," said the policeman.

Beaton felt a sudden turn of his rage toward the men whose action would now force him to walk five blocks and mount the stairs of the Elevated station. "If you'd take out eight or ten of those fellows," he said ferociously, "and set them up against a wall and shoot them, you'd save a great deal of bother."

"I guess we sha'n't have to shoot much," said the policeman, still swinging his locust. "Anyway, we sha'n't begin it. If it comes to a fight, though," he said, with a look at the men under the scooping rim of his helmet, "we can drive the whole six thousand of 'em into the East River without pullin' a trigger."

"Are there six thousand in it?"

"About."

"What do the infernal fools expect to live on?"

"The interest of their money, I suppose," said the officer, with a grin of satisfaction in his irony. "It's got to run its course. Then they'll come back with their heads tied up and their tails between their legs, and plead to be taken on again."

"If I was a manager of the roads," said Beaton, thinking of how much he was already inconvenienced by the strike, and obscurely connecting it as one of the series with the wrongs he had suffered at the hands of Mrs. Horn and Mrs. Mandel, "I would see them starve before I'd take them back—every one of them."

"Well," said the policeman impartially, as a man might whom the companies allowed to ride free, but who had made friends with a good many drivers and conductors in the course of his free riding, "I guess that's what the roads would like to do if they could; but the men are too many for them, and there ain't enough other men to take their places."

"No matter," said Beaton severely. "They can bring in men from other places."

"Oh, they'll do that fast enough," said the policeman.

A man came out of the saloon on the corner where the strikers were standing, noisy drunk, and they began, as they would have said, to have some fun with him. The policeman left Beaton, and sauntered slowly down toward the group as if in the natural course of an afternoon ramble. On the other side of the street Beaton could see another officer sauntering up from the block below. Looking up and down the avenue, so silent of its horse-car bells, he saw a policeman at every corner. It was rather impressive.

III.

THE strike made a good deal of talk in the office of *Every Other Week*—that is, it made Fulkerson talk a good deal. He congratulated himself that he was not personally incommoded by it, like some of the fellows who lived up-town, and had not everything under one roof, as it were. He enjoyed the excitement of it, and he kept the office-boy running out to buy the extras which the newsmen came crying through the street almost every hour with a lamentable, unintelligible noise. He read not only the latest intelligence of the strike, but the editorial comments on it, which praised the firm attitude of both parties, and the admirable measures taken by the police to preserve order. Fulkerson enjoyed the interviews with the police captains and the leaders of the strike; he equally enjoyed the attempts of the reporters to interview the road managers, which were so graphically detailed, and with such a fine feeling for the right use of scare-heads as to have almost the value of direct expressions from them, though it seemed that they had resolutely refused to speak. He said, at second-hand from the papers, that if the men behaved

themselves and respected the rights of property, they would have public sympathy with them every time; but just as soon as they began to interfere with the roads' right to manage their own affairs in their own way, they must be put down with an iron hand; the phrase "iron hand" did Fulkerson almost as much good as if it had never been used before. News began to come of fighting between the police and the strikers when the roads tried to move their cars with men imported from Philadelphia, and then Fulkerson rejoiced at the splendid courage of the police. At the same time he believed what the strikers said, and that the trouble was not made by them, but by gangs of roughs acting without their approval. In this juncture he was relieved by the arrival of the State Board of Arbitration, which took up its quarters, with a great many scare-heads, at one of the principal hotels, and invited the roads and the strikers to lay the matter in dispute before them; he said that now we should see the working of the greatest piece of social machinery in modern times. But it appeared to work only in the alacrity of the strikers to submit their grievance. The roads were as one road in declaring that there was nothing to arbitrate, and that they were merely asserting their right to manage their own affairs in their own way. One of the presidents was reported to have told a member of the Board, who personally summoned him, to get out and to go about his business. Then, to Fulkerson's extreme disappointment, the august tribunal, acting on behalf of the

sovereign people in the interest of peace, declared itself powerless and got out, and would, no doubt, have gone about its business if it had had any. Fulkerson did not know what to say, perhaps because the extras did not ; but March laughed at this result.

“ It’s a good deal like the military manœuvre of the King of France and his forty thousand men. I suppose somebody told him at the top of the hill that there was nothing to arbitrate, and to get out and go about his business, and that was the reason he marched down after he had marched up with all that ceremony. What amuses me is to find that in an affair of this kind the roads have rights and the strikers have rights, but the public has no rights at all. The roads and the strikers are allowed to fight out a private war in our midst—as thoroughly and precisely a private war as any we despise the Middle Ages for having tolerated—as any street war in Florence or Verona—and to fight it out at our pains and expense, and we stand by like sheep, and wait till we get tired. It’s a funny attitude for a city of fifteen hundred thousand inhabitants.”

“ What would you do ? ” asked Fulkerson, a good deal daunted by this view of the case.

“ Do ? Nothing. Hasn’t the State Board of Arbitration declared itself powerless ? We have no hold upon the strikers ; and we’re so used to being snubbed and disobliged by common carriers that we have forgotten our hold on the roads, and always allow them to manage their own affairs in their own

way, quite as if we had nothing to do with them, and they owed us no services in return for their privileges."

"That's a good deal so," said Fulkerson, disordering his hair. "Well, it's nuts for the colonel nowadays. He says if he was boss of this town he would seize the roads on behalf of the people, and man 'em with policemen, and run 'em till the managers had come to terms with the strikers; and he'd do that every time there was a strike."

"Doesn't that rather savour of the paternalism he condemned in Lindau?" asked March.

"I don't know. It savours of horse-sense."

"You are pretty far gone, Fulkerson. I thought you were the most engaged man I ever saw; but I guess you're more father-in-lawed. And before you're married too."

"Well, the colonel's a glorious old fellow, March. I wish he had the power to do that thing, just for the fun of looking on while he waltzed in. He's on the keen jump from morning till night, and he's up late and early to see the row. I'm afraid he'll get shot at some of the fights; he sees them all; *I* can't get any show at them: haven't seen a brickbat shied or a club swung yet. Have you?"

"No, I find I can philosophise the situation about as well from the papers, and that's what I really want to do, I suppose. Besides I'm solemnly pledged by Mrs. March not to go near any sort of crowd, under penalty of having her bring the children and go with me. Her theory is that we must all die

together; the children haven't been at school since the strike began. There's no precaution that Mrs. March hasn't used. She watches me whenever I go out, and sees that I start straight for this office."

Fulkerson laughed and said: "Well, it's probably the only thing that's saved your life. Have you seen anything of Beaton lately?"

"No. You don't mean to say *he's* killed!"

"Not if he knows it. But I don't know——. What do you say, March? What's the reason you couldn't get us up a paper on the strike?"

"I knew it would fetch round to *Every Other Week*, somehow."

"No, but seriously. There'll be plenty of newspaper accounts. But you could treat it in the historical spirit—like something that happened several centuries ago; De Foe's Plague of London style. Heigh? What made me think of it was Beaton. If I could get hold of him, you two could go round together and take down its æsthetic aspects. It's a big thing, March, this strike is. I tell you it's imposing to have a private war, as you say, fought out this way, in the heart of New York, and New York not minding it a bit. See? Might take that view of it. With your descriptions and Beaton's sketches—well, it would just be the greatest card! Come! What do you say?"

"Will you undertake to make it right with Mrs. March if I'm killed and she and the children are not killed with me?"

"Well, it would be difficult. I wonder how

it would do to get Kendricks to do the literary part?"

"I've no doubt he'd jump at the chance. I've yet to see the form of literature that Kendricks wouldn't lay down his life for."

"Say!" March perceived that Fulkerson was about to vent another inspiration, and smiled patiently. "Look here! What's the reason we couldn't get one of the strikers to write it up for us?"

"Might have a symposium of strikers and presidents," March suggested.

"No; I'm in earnest. They say some of those fellows—especially the foreigners—are educated men. I know one fellow—a Bohemian—that used to edit a Bohemian newspaper here. He could write it out in his kind of Dutch, and we could get Lindau to translate it."

"I guess not," said March dryly.

"Why not? He'd do it for the cause, wouldn't he? Suppose you put it up on him, the next time you see him."

"I don't see Lindau any more," said March. He added, "I guess he's renounced me along with Mr. Dryfoos's money."

"Pshaw! You don't mean he hasn't been round since?"

"He came for a while, but he's left off coming now. I don't feel particularly gay about it," March said, with some resentment of Fulkerson's grin. "He's left me in debt to him for lessons to the children."

Fulkerson laughed out. "Well, he is the greatest old fool ! Who 'd 'a' thought he 'd 'a' been in earnest with those 'brincibles' of his ? But I suppose there have to be just such cranks ; it takes all kinds to make a world."

"There has to be *one* such crank, it seems," March partially assented. "One's enough for me."

"I reckon this thing is nuts for Lindau, too," said Fulkerson. "Why, it must act like a schooner of beer on him all the while, to see 'gabidal' embarrassed like it is by this strike. It must make old Lindau feel like he was back behind those barricades at Berlin. Well, he's a splendid old fellow ; pity he drinks, as I remarked once before."

When March left the office he did not go home so directly as he came, perhaps because Mrs. March's eye was not on him. He was very curious about some aspects of the strike, whose importance, as a great social convulsion, he felt people did not recognise ; and with his temperance in everything, he found its negative expressions as significant as its more violent phases. He had promised his wife solemnly that he would keep away from these, and he had a natural inclination to keep his promise ; he had no wish to be that peaceful spectator who always gets shot when there is any firing on a mob. He interested himself in the apparent indifference of the mighty city, which kept on about its business as tranquilly as if the private war being fought out in its midst were a vague rumour of Indian troubles on the frontier ; and he realised how there might once

have been a street feud of forty years in Florence without interfering materially with the industry and prosperity of the city. On Broadway there was a silence where a jangle and clatter of horse-car bells and hoofs had been, but it was not very noticeable ; and on the avenues, roofed by the elevated roads, this silence of the surface tracks was not noticeable at all in the roar of the trains overhead. Some of the cross-town cars were beginning to run again ; with a policeman on the rear of each ; on the Third Avenue line, operated by non-union men, who had not struck, there were two policemen beside the driver of every car, and two beside the conductor, to protect them from the strikers. But there were no strikers in sight, and on Second Avenue they stood quietly about in groups on the corners. While March watched them at a safe distance, a car laden with policemen came down the track, but none of the strikers offered to molest it. In their simple Sunday best, March thought them very quiet, decent-looking people, and he could well believe that they had nothing to do with the riotous outbreaks in other parts of the city. He could hardly believe that there were any such outbreaks ; he began more and more to think them mere newspaper exaggerations in the absence of any disturbance, or the disposition to it, that he could see. He walked on to the East River : Avenues A, B, and C presented the same quiet aspect as Second Avenue ; groups of men stood on the corners, and now and then a police-laden car was brought unmolested down the tracks

before them ; they looked at it and talked together, and some laughed, but there was no trouble.

March got a cross-town car, and came back to the West side. A policeman, looking very sleepy and tired, lounged on the platform.

"I suppose you'll be glad when this cruel war is over," March suggested, as he got in.

The officer gave him a surly glance and made him no answer.

His behaviour, from a man born to the joking give and take of our life, impressed March. It gave him a fine sense of the ferocity which he had read of the French troops putting on toward the populace just before the *coup d'état* ; he began to feel like populace ; but he struggled with himself and regained his character of philosophical observer. In this character he remained in the car and let it carry him by the corner where he ought to have got out and gone home, and let it keep on with him to one of the furthestmost tracks westward, where so much of the fighting was reported to have taken place. But everything on the way was as quiet as on the East side.

Suddenly the car stopped with so quick a turn of the brake that he was half thrown from his seat, and the policeman jumped down from the platform and ran forward.

IV.

DRYFOOS sat at breakfast that morning with Mrs. Mandel as usual to pour out his coffee. Conrad had already gone down-town; the two girls lay abed much later than their father breakfasted, and their mother had gradually grown too feeble to come down till lunch. Suddenly Christine appeared at the door. Her face was white to the edges of her lips, and her eyes were blazing.

"Look here, father! Have you been saying anything to Mr. Beaton?"

The old man looked up at her across his coffee-cup through his frowning brows. "No."

Mrs. Mandel dropped her eyes, and the spoon shook in her hand.

"Then what's the reason he don't come here any more?" demanded the girl; and her glance darted from her father to Mrs. Mandel. "Oh, it's *you*, is it? I'd like to know who told *you* to meddle in other people's business?"

"*I* did," said Dryfoos savagely. "*I* told her to ask him what he wanted here, and he said he didn't want anything, and he stopped coming. That's all. I did it myself."

"Oh, you *did*, did you?" said the girl, scarcely less insolently than she had spoken to Mrs. Mandel. "I should like to know what you did it for? I'd like to know what made you think I wasn't able to take care of myself. I just knew somebody had been meddling, but I didn't suppose it was *you*. I can manage my own affairs in my own way, if you please, and I'll thank you after this to leave me to myself in what don't concern you."

"Don't concern me? You impudent jade!" her father began.

Christine advanced from the doorway toward the table; she had her hands closed upon what seemed trinkets, some of which glittered and dangled from them. She said, "Will you go to him and tell him that this meddlesome minx here had no business to say anything about me to him, and you take it all back?"

"No!" shouted the old man. "And if——"

"That's all I want of *you*!" the girl shouted in her turn. "Here are your presents." With both hands she flung the jewels—pins and rings and earrings and bracelets—among the breakfast dishes, from which some of them sprang to the floor. She stood a moment to pull the intaglio ring from the finger where Beaton put it a year ago, and dashed that at her father's plate. Then she whirled out of the room, and they heard her running upstairs.

The old man made a start toward her, but he fell back in his chair before she was gone, and with a fierce, grinding movement of his jaws, controlled

himself. "Take—take those things up," he gasped to Mrs. Mandel. He seemed unable to rise again from his chair, but when she asked him if he were unwell, he said no, with an air of offence, and got quickly to his feet. He mechanically picked up the intaglio ring from the table while he stood there, and put it on his little finger; his hand was not much bigger than Christine's. "How do you suppose she found it out?" he asked, after a moment.

"She seems to have merely suspected it," said Mrs. Mandel, in a tremor, and with the fright in her eyes which Christine's violence had brought there.

"Well, it don't make any difference. She had to know, somehow, and now she knows." He started toward the door of the library, as if to go into the hall, where his hat and coat always hung.

"Mr. Dryfoos," palpitated Mrs. Mandel, "I can't remain here, after the language your daughter has used to me—I can't let you leave me—I—I'm afraid of her——"

"Lock yourself up, then," said the old man rudely. He added, from the hall before he went out, "I reckon she'll quiet down now."

He took the elevated road. The strike seemed a very far-off thing, though the paper he bought to look up the stock market was full of noisy typography about yesterday's troubles on the surface lines. Among the millions in Wall Street there was some joking and some swearing, but not much thinking about the six thousand men who had taken such

chances in their attempt to better their condition. Dryfoos heard nothing of the strike in the lobby of the Stock Exchange, where he spent two or three hours watching a favourite stock of his go up and go down under the betting. By the time the Exchange closed it had risen eight points, and on this and some other investments he was five thousand dollars richer than he had been in the morning. But he had expected to be richer still, and he was by no means satisfied with his luck. All through the excitement of his winning and losing had played the dull, murderous rage he felt toward the child who had defied him, and when the game was over and he started home, his rage mounted into a sort of frenzy; he would teach her, he would break her. He walked a long way without thinking, and then waited for a car. None came, and he hailed a passing coupé.

"What has got all the cars?" he demanded of the driver, who jumped down from his box to open the door for him and get his direction.

"Been away?" asked the driver. "Hasn't been any car along for a week. Strike."

"Oh yes," said Dryfoos. He felt suddenly giddy, and he remained staring at the driver after he had taken his seat.

The man asked, "Where to?"

Dryfoos could not think of his street or number, and he said with uncontrollable fury, "I told you once! Go up to West Eleventh, and drive along slow on the south side; I'll show you the place."

He could not remember the number of *Every Other Week* office, where he suddenly decided to stop before he went home. He wished to see Fulkerson, and ask him something about Beaton: whether he had been about lately, and whether he had dropped any hint of what had happened concerning Christine; Dryfoos believed that Fulkerson was in the fellow's confidence.

There was nobody but Conrad in the counting-room, whither Dryfoos returned after glancing into Fulkerson's empty office. "Where's Fulkerson?" he asked, sitting down with his hat on.

"He went out a few moments ago," said Conrad, glancing at the clock. "I'm afraid he isn't coming back again to-day, if you wanted to see him."

Dryfoos twisted his head sidewise and upward to indicate March's room. "That other fellow out, too?"

"He went just before Mr. Fulkerson," answered Conrad.

"Do you generally knock off here in the middle of the afternoon?" asked the old man.

"No," said Conrad, as patiently as if his father had not been there a score of times, and found the whole staff of *Every Other Week* at work between four and five. "Mr. March, you know, always takes a good deal of his work home with him, and I suppose Mr. Fulkerson went out so early because there isn't much doing to-day. Perhaps it's the strike that makes it dull."

"The strike—yes! It's a pretty piece of business

to have everything thrown out because a parcel of lazy hounds want a chance to lay off and get drunk." Dryfoos seemed to think Conrad would make some answer to this, but the young man's mild face merely saddened, and he said nothing. "I've got a coupé out there now that I had to take because I couldn't get a car. If I had my way I'd have a lot of those vagabonds hung. They're waiting to get the city into a snarl, and then rob the houses—pack of dirty, worthless whelps. They ought to call out the militia, and fire into 'em. Clubbing is too good for them." Conrad was still silent, and his father sneered, "But I reckon *you* don't think so."

"I think the strike is useless," said Conrad.

"Oh, you *do*, do you? Comin' to your senses a little. Gettin' tired walkin' so much. I should like to know what your gentlemen over there on the East side think about the strike, anyway."

The young fellow dropped his eyes. "I am not authorised to speak for them."

"Oh, indeed! And perhaps you're not authorised to speak for yourself?"

"Father, you know we don't agree about these things. I'd rather not talk——"

"But I'm goin' to *make* you talk this time!" cried Dryfoos, striking the arm of the chair he sat in with the side of his fist. A maddening thought of Christine came over him. "As long as you eat my bread, you have got to do as I say. I won't have my children telling me what I shall do and sha'n't do, or take on airs of being holier than me,

Now, you just speak up! Do you think those loafers are right, or don't you? Come!"

Conrad apparently judged it best to speak. "I think they were very foolish to strike—at this time, when the elevated roads can do the work."

"Oh, at this time, heigh! And I suppose they think over there on the East side that it'd been wise to strike before we got the elevated." Conrad again refused to answer, and his father roared, "What do you think?"

"I think a strike is always bad business. It's war; but sometimes there don't seem any other way for the working men to get justice. They say that sometimes strikes do raise the wages, after a while."

"Those lazy devils were paid enough already," shrieked the old man. "They got two dollars a day. How much do you think they ought to 'a' got? Twenty?"

Conrad hesitated, with a beseeching look at his father. But he decided to answer. "The men say that with partial work, and fines, and other things, they get sometimes a dollar, and sometimes ninety cents a day."

"They lie, and you *know* they lie," said his father, rising and coming toward him. "And what do you think the upshot of it all will be, after they've ruined business for another week, and made people hire hacks, and stolen the money of honest men? How is it going to end?"

"They will have to give in."

"Oh, give in, heigh! And what will you say *then*, I should like to know? How will you feel about it then? Speak!"

"I shall feel as I do now. I know you don't think that way, and I don't blame you—or anybody. But if I have got to say how I shall feel, why, I shall feel sorry they didn't succeed, for I believe they have a righteous cause, though they go the wrong way to help themselves."

His father came close to him, his eyes blazing, his teeth set. "Do you *dare* to say that to me?"

"Yes. I can't help it. I pity them; my whole heart is with those poor men."

"You impudent puppy!" shouted the old man. He lifted his hand and struck his son in the face. Conrad caught his hand with his own left, and while the blood began to trickle from a wound that Christine's intaglio ring had made in his temple, he looked at him with a kind of grieving wonder, and said, "Father!"

The old man wrenched his fist away, and ran out of the house. He remembered his address now, and he gave it as he plunged into the coupé. He trembled with his evil passion, and glared out of the windows at the passers as he drove home; he only saw Conrad's mild grieving, wondering eyes, and the blood slowly trickling from the wound in his temple.

Conrad went to the neat set-bowl in Fulkerson's comfortable room, and washed the blood away, and kept bathing the wound with the cold water till it stopped bleeding. The cut was not deep, and he

thought he would not put anything on it. After a while he locked up the office, and started out, he hardly knew where. But he walked on, in the direction he had taken, till he found himself in Union Square, on the pavement in front of Brentano's. It seemed to him that he heard some one calling gently to him, "Mr. Dryfoos!"

V.

CONRAD looked confusedly around, and the same voice said again, "Mr. Dryfoos!" and he saw that it was a lady speaking to him from a coupé beside the curbing, and then he saw that it was Miss Vance.

She smiled when he gave signs of having discovered her, and came up to the door of her carriage. "I am so glad to meet you. I have been longing to talk to somebody; nobody seems to feel about it as I do. Oh, isn't it horrible? *Must* they fail? I saw cars running on all the lines as I came across; it made me sick at heart. *Must* those brave fellows give in? And everybody seems to hate them so—I can't bear it." Her face was estranged with excitement, and there were traces of tears on it. "You must think me almost crazy to stop you in the street this way; but when I caught sight of you I had to speak. I knew you would sympathise—I knew you would feel as I do. Oh, how can anybody help honouring those poor men for standing by one another as they do? They are risking all they have in the world for the sake of justice! Oh, they are true heroes! They are staking the bread of their wives and children on the dreadful chance they've

taken! But no one seems to understand it. No one seems to see that they are willing to suffer more now that other poor men may suffer less hereafter. And those wretched creatures that are coming in to take their places—those traitors——”

“We can’t blame them for wanting to earn a living, Miss Vance,” said Conrad.

“No, no! I don’t blame them. Who am I, to do such a thing? It’s *we*—people like me, of my class—who make the poor betray one another. But this dreadful fighting—this hideous paper is full of it!” She held up an extra, crumpled with her nervous reading. “Can’t something be done to stop it? Don’t you think that if some one went among them, and tried to make them see how perfectly hopeless it was to resist the companies, and drive off the new men, he might do some good? I have wanted to go and try; but I am a woman, and I mustn’t! I shouldn’t be afraid of the strikers, but I’m afraid of what people would say!” Conrad kept pressing his handkerchief to the cut in his temple, which he thought might be bleeding, and now she noticed this. “Are you hurt, Mr. Dryfoos? You look so pale.”

“No, it’s nothing—a little scratch I’ve got.”

“Indeed you look pale. Have you a carriage? How will you get home? Will you get in here with me, and let me drive you?”

“No, no,” said Conrad, smiling at her excitement. “I’m perfectly well——”

“And you don’t think I’m foolish and wicked for

stopping you here, and talking in this way? But I know you feel as I do!"

"Yes, I feel as you do. You are right—right in every way—I mustn't keep you—Good-bye." He stepped back to bow, but she put her beautiful hand out of the window, and when he took it she wrung his hand hard.

"Thank you, thank you! You are good and you are just! But no one can do anything. It's useless!"

The type of irreproachable coachman on the box whose respectability had suffered through the strange behaviour of his mistress in this interview, drove quickly off at her signal, and Conrad stood a moment looking after the carriage. His heart was full of joy; it leaped; he thought it would burst. As he turned to walk away it seemed to him as if he mounted upon the air. The trust she had shown him, the praise she had given him; that crush of the hand: he hoped nothing, he formed no idea from it, but it all filled him with love that cast out the pain and shame he had been suffering. He believed that he could never be unhappy any more; the hardness that was in his mind toward his father went out of it; he saw how sorely he had tried him; he grieved that he had done it, but the means, the difference of his feeling about the cause of their quarrel, he was solemnly glad of that since she shared it. He was only sorry for his father. "Poor father!" he said under his breath as he went along. He explained to her about his father in his reverie, and she pitied his father too.

He was walking over toward the West side, aimlessly at first, and then at times with the longing to do something to save those mistaken men from themselves forming itself into a purpose. Was not that what she meant, when she bewailed her woman's helplessness? She must have wished him to try, if he, being a man, could not do something; or if she did not, still he would try, and if she heard of it, she would recall what she had said, and would be glad he had understood her so. Thinking of her pleasure in what he was going to do, he forgot almost what it was; but when he came to a street-car track he remembered it, and looked up and down to see if there were any turbulent gathering of men, whom he might mingle with and help to keep from violence. He saw none anywhere; and then suddenly, as if at the same moment, for in his exalted mood all events had a dream-like simultaneity, he stood at the corner of an avenue, and in the middle of it, a little way off, was a street-car, and around the car a tumult of shouting, cursing, struggling men. The driver was lashing his horses forward, and a policeman was at their heads, with the conductor, pulling them; stones, clubs, brick-bats hailed upon the car, the horses, the men trying to move them. The mob closed upon them in a body, and then a patrol-wagon whirled up from the other side, and a squad of policemen leaped out, and began to club the rioters. Conrad could see how they struck them under the rims of their hats; the blows on their skulls sounded as if

they had fallen on stone ; the rioters ran in all directions.

One of the officers rushed up toward the corner where Conrad stood, and then he saw at his side a tall old man with a long white beard. He was calling out at the policeman : " Ah yes ! Glup the strikerss—gif it to them ! Why don't you co and glup the bresidents that insoalt your lawss, and gick your Boart of Arpidration out-of-toors ? Glup the strikerss—they cot no friendts ! They cot no money to pribe you, to dreat you ! "

The officer lifted his club, and the old man threw his left arm up to shield his head. Conrad recognised Lindau, and now he saw the empty sleeve dangle in the air, over the stump of his wrist. He heard a shot in that turmoil beside the car, and something seemed to strike him in the breast. He was going to say to the policeman, " Don't strike him ! He's an old soldier ! You see he has no hand ! " but he could not speak, he could not move his tongue. The policeman stood there ; he saw his face : it was not bad, not cruel ; it was like the face of a statue, fixed, perdurable ; a mere image of irresponsible and involuntary authority. Then Conrad fell forward, pierced through the heart by that shot fired from the car.

March heard the shot as he scrambled out of his car, and at the same moment he saw Lindau drop under the club of the policeman, who left him where he fell, and joined the rest of the squad in pursuing the rioters. The fighting round the car in the

avenue ceased ; the driver whipped his horses into a gallop, and the place was left empty.

March would have liked to run ; he thought how his wife had implored him to keep away from the rioting ; but he could not have left Lindau lying there if he would. Something stronger than his will drew him to the spot, and there he saw Conrad dead beside the old man.

VI.

IN the cares which Mrs. March shared with her husband that night she was supported partly by principle, but mainly by the potent excitement which bewildered Conrad's family and took all reality from what had happened. It was nearly midnight when the Marches left them and walked away toward the elevated station with Fulkerson. Everything had been done, by that time, that could be done ; and Fulkerson was not without that satisfaction in the business-like despatch of all the details which attends each step in such an affair, and helps to make death tolerable even to the most sorely stricken. We are creatures of the moment ; we live from one little space to another ; and only one interest at a time fills these. Fulkerson was cheerful when they got into the street, almost gay ; and Mrs. March experienced a rebound from her depression which she felt that she ought not to have experienced. But she condoned the offence a little in herself, because her husband remained so constant in his gravity ; and pending the final accounting he must make her for having been where he could be of so much use from the first instant of the calamity, she was tenderly,

gratefully proud of all the use he had been to Conrad's family, and especially his miserable old father. To her mind March was the principal actor in the whole affair, and much more important in having seen it than those who had suffered in it. In fact, he had suffered incomparably.

"Well, well," said Fulkerson. "They'll get along now. We've done all *we* could, and there's nothing left but for them to bear it. Of course it's awful, but I guess it'll come out all right. I mean," he added, "they'll pull through now."

"I suppose," said March, "that nothing is put on us that we can't bear. But I should think," he went on musingly, "that when God sees what we poor finite creatures *can* bear, hemmed round with this eternal darkness of death, He must respect us."

"Basil!" said his wife. But in her heart she drew nearer to him for the words she thought she ought to rebuke him for.

"Oh, I know," he said, "we school ourselves to despise human nature. But God did not make us despicable, and I say whatever end He meant us for, He must have some such thrill of joy in our adequacy to fate as a father feels when his son shows himself a man. When I think what we can be if we must, I can't believe the least of us shall finally perish."

"Oh, I reckon the Almighty won't scoop any of us," said Fulkerson, with a piety of his own.

"That poor boy's father!" sighed Mrs. March.

"I can't get his face out of my sight. He looked so much worse than death."

"Oh, death doesn't look bad," said March. "It's life that looks so in its presence. Death is peace and pardon. I only wish poor old Lindau was as well out of it as Conrad there."

"Ah, Lindau! He has done harm enough," said Mrs. March. "I hope he will be careful after this."

March did not try to defend Lindau against her theory of the case, which inexorably held him responsible for Conrad's death.

"Lindau's going to come out all right, I guess," said Fulkerson. "He was first-rate when I saw him at the hospital to-night." He whispered in March's ear, at a chance he got in mounting the station stairs: "I didn't like to tell you there at the house, but I guess you'd better know. They had to take Lindau's arm off near the shoulder. Smashed all to pieces by the clubbing."

In the house, vainly rich and foolishly unfit for them, the bereaved family whom the Marches had just left lingered together, and tried to get strength to part for the night. They were all spent with the fatigue that comes from heaven to such misery as theirs, and they sat in a torpor in which each waited for the other to move, to speak.

Christine moved, and Mela spoke. Christine rose and went out of the room without saying a word, and they heard her going upstairs. Then Mela said,

"I reckon the rest of us better be gown' too, father. Here, let's git mother started."

She put her arm round her mother, to lift her from her chair, but the old man did not stir, and Mela called Mrs. Mandel from the next room. Between them they raised her to her feet.

"Ain't there anybody a-goin' to set up with it?" she asked, in her hoarse pipe. "It appears like folks hain't got any feelin's in New York. Woon't some o' the neighbours come and offer to set up, without waitin' to be asked?"

"Oh, that's all right, mother. The men'll attend to that. Don't you bother any," Mela coaxed, and she kept her arm round her mother, with tender patience.

"Why, Mely, child! I can't feel right to have it left to hirelin's, so. But there ain't anybody any more to see things done as they ought. If Coonrod was on'y here——"

"Well, mother, you *are* pretty mixed!" said Mela, with a strong tendency to break into her large guffaw. But she checked herself and said, "I know just how you feel, though. It keeps a-comun' and a-goun'; and it's so and it ain't so, all at once; that's the plague of it. Well, father! Ain't you goun' to come?"

"I'm goin' to stay, Mela," said the old man gently, without moving. "Get your mother to bed, that's a good girl."

"You goin' to set up with him, Jacob?" asked the old woman.

"Yes, 'Liz'beth, I'll set up. You go to bed."

"Well, I will, Jacob. And I believe it'll do you

good to set up. I wished I could set up with you ; but I don't seem to have the stren'th I did when the twins died. I must git my sleep, so 's to—I don't like very well to have you broke of your rest, Jacob, but there don't appear to be anybody else. You wouldn't have to do it if Coonrod was here. There I go ag'in ! Mercy ! mercy !”

“Well, do come along, then, mother,” said Mela ; and she got her out of the room, with Mrs. Mandel's help, and up the stairs.

From the top the old woman called down : “You tell Coonrod——” She stopped, and he heard her groan out, “My Lord ! my Lord !”

He sat, one silence in the dining-room, where they had all lingered together, and in the library beyond the hireling watcher sat, another silence. The time passed, but neither moved, and the last noise in the house ceased, so that they heard each other breathe, and the vague, remote rumour of the city invaded the inner stillness. It grew louder toward morning, and then Dryfoos knew from the watcher's deeper breathing that he had fallen into a doze.

He crept by him to the drawing-room, where his son was ; the place was full of the awful sweetness of the flowers that Fulkerson had brought, and that lay above the pulseless breast. The old man turned up a burner in the chandelier, and stood looking on the majestic serenity of the dead face.

He could not move when he saw his wife coming down the stairway in the hall. She was in her long white flannel bedgown, and the candle she carried

shook with her nervous tremor. He thought she might be waking in her sleep, but she said, quite simply, "I woke up, and I couldn't git to sleep ag'in without comin' to have a look." She stood beside their dead son with him. "Well, he's beautiful, Jacob. He was the prettiest baby! And he was always good, Coonrod was; I'll say that for him. I don't believe he ever give me a minute's care in his whole life. I reckon I liked him about the best of all the childern; but I don't know as I ever done much to show it. But you was always good to him, Jacob; you always done the best for him, ever since he was a little feller. I used to be afraid you'd spoil him sometimes in them days; but I guess you're glad now for every time you didn't cross him. I don't suppose since the twins died you ever hit him a lick." She stooped and peered closer at the face. "Why, Jacob, what's that there by his pore eye?"

Dryfoos saw it too, the wound that he had feared to look for, and that now seemed to redden on his sight. He broke into a low, wavering cry, like a child's in despair, like an animal's in terror, like a soul's in the anguish of remorse.

VII.

THE evening after the funeral, while the Marches sat together talking it over, and making approaches, through its shadow, to the question of their own future, which it involved, they were startled by the twitter of the electric bell at their apartment door. It was really not so late as the children's having gone to bed made it seem; but at nine o'clock it was too late for any probable visitor except Fulkerson. It might be he, and March was glad to postpone the impending question to his curiosity concerning the immediate business Fulkerson might have with him. He went himself to the door, and confronted there a lady deeply veiled in black, and attended by a very decorous serving-woman.

"Are you alone, Mr. March—you and Mrs. March?" asked the lady, behind her veil; and as he hesitated, she said, "You don't know me! Miss Vance;" and she threw back her veil, showing her face wan and agitated in the dark folds. "I am very anxious to see you—to speak with you both. May I come in?"

"Why, certainly, Miss Vance," he answered, still too much stupefied by her presence to realise it.

She promptly entered, and saying, with a glance at the hall chair by the door, "My maid can sit here?" followed him to the room where he had left his wife.

Mrs. March showed herself more capable of coping with the fact. She welcomed Miss Vance with the liking they both felt for the girl, and with the sympathy which her troubled face inspired.

"I won't tire you with excuses for coming, Mrs. March," she said, "for it was the only thing left for me to do; and I come at my aunt's suggestion." She added this as if it would help to account for her more on the conventional plane, and she had the instinctive good taste to address herself throughout to Mrs. March as much as possible, though what she had to say was mainly for March. "I don't know how to begin—I don't know how to speak of this terrible affair. But you know what I mean. I feel as if I had lived a whole lifetime since it—happened. I don't want you to pity me for it," she said, forestalling a politeness from Mrs. March. "I'm the last one to be thought of, and you mustn't mind me if I try to make you. I came to find out all of the truth that I can, and when I know just what that is I shall know what to do. I have read the inquest; it's all burnt into my brain. But I don't care for that—for myself: you must let me say such things without minding me. I know that your husband—that Mr. March was there; I read his testimony; and I wished to ask him—to ask him——" She stopped and looked distractedly about. "But what

folly! He must have said everything he knew—he had to.” Her eyes wandered to him from his wife, on whom she had kept them with instinctive tact.

“I said everything—yes,” he replied. “But if you would like to know——”

“Perhaps I had better tell you something first. I had just parted with him—it couldn’t have been more than half an hour—in front of Brentano’s; he must have gone straight to his death. We were talking, and I—I said, Why didn’t some one go among the strikers and plead with them to be peaceable, and keep them from attacking the new men. I knew that he felt as I did about the strikers; that he was their friend. Did you see—do you know anything that makes you think he had been trying to do that?”

“I am sorry,” March began, “I didn’t see him at all till—till I saw him lying dead.”

“My husband was there purely by accident,” Mrs. March put in. “I had begged and entreated him not to go near the striking anywhere. And he had just got out of the car, and saw the policeman strike that wretched Lindau—he’s been such an anxiety to me ever since we have had anything to do with him here; my husband knew him when he was a boy in the West. Mr. March came home from it all perfectly prostrated; it made us all sick! Nothing so horrible ever came into our lives before. I assure you it was the most shocking experience.”

Miss Vance listened to her with that look of patience which those who have seen much of the

real suffering of the world—the daily portion of the poor—have for the nervous woes of comfortable people. March hung his head; he knew it would be useless to protest that his share of the calamity was, by comparison, infinitesimally small.

After she had heard Mrs. March to the end even of her repetitions, Miss Vance said, as if it were a mere matter of course that she should have looked the affair up, “Yes, I have seen Mr. Lindau at the hospital——”

“My husband goes every day to see him,” Mrs. March interrupted, to give a final touch to the conception of March’s magnanimity throughout.

“The poor man seems to have been in the wrong at the time,” said Miss Vance.

“I could almost say he had earned the right to be wrong. He’s a man of the most generous instincts, and a high ideal of justice, of equity—too high to be considered by a policeman with a club in his hand,” said March, with a bold defiance of his wife’s different opinion of Lindau. “It’s the policeman’s business, I suppose, to club the ideal when he finds it inciting a riot.”

“Oh, I don’t blame Mr. Lindau; I don’t blame the policeman; he was as much a mere instrument as his club was. I am only trying to find out how much I am to blame myself. I had no thought of Mr. Dryfoos’s going there—of his attempting to talk with the strikers and keep them quiet; I was only thinking, as women do, of what I should try to do if I were a man. But perhaps he understood me to

ask him to go—perhaps my words sent him to his death.”

She had a sort of calm in her courage to know the worst truth as to her responsibility that forbade any wish to flatter her out of it. “I’m afraid,” said March, “that is what can never be known now.” After a moment he added, “But why should you wish to know? If he went there as a peace-maker, he died in a good cause, in such a way as he would wish to die, I believe.”

“Yes,” said the girl; “I have thought of that. But death is awful; we must not think patiently, forgivingly of sending any one to their death in the best cause.”

“I fancy life was an awful thing to Conrad Dryfoos,” March replied. “He was thwarted and disappointed, without even pleasing the ambition that thwarted and disappointed him. That poor old man, his father, warped him from his simple, life-long wish to be a minister, and was trying to make a business-man of him. If it will be any consolation to you to know it, Miss Vance, I can assure you that he was very unhappy, and I don’t see how he could ever have been happy here.”

“It won’t,” said the girl steadily. “If people are born into this world, it’s because they were meant to live in it. It isn’t a question of being happy here; no one is happy, in that old selfish way, or can be; but he could have been of great use.”

“Perhaps he was of use in dying. Who knows? He may have been trying to silence Lindau.”

"Oh, Lindau wasn't worth it!" cried Mrs. March.

Miss Vance looked at her as if she did not quite understand. Then she turned to March. "He might have been unhappy, as we all are; but I know that his life here would have had a higher happiness than we wish for or aim for." The tears began to run silently down her cheeks.

"He looked strangely happy that day when he left me. He had hurt himself somehow, and his face was bleeding from a scratch; he kept his handkerchief up; he was pale, but such a *light* came into his face when he shook hands—ah, I know he went to try and do what I said!" They were all silent, while she dried her eyes and then put her handkerchief back into the pocket from which she had suddenly pulled it, with a series of vivid, young-ladyish gestures, which struck March by their incongruity with the occasion of their talk, and yet by their harmony with the rest of her elegance. "I am sorry, Miss Vance," he began, "that I can't really tell you anything more——"

"You are very kind," she said, controlling herself and rising quickly. "I thank you—thank you both very much." She turned to Mrs. March and shook hands with her and then with him. "I might have known—I did know that there wasn't anything more for you to tell. But at least I've found out from you that there *was* nothing, and now I can begin to bear what I must. How are those poor creatures—his mother and father, his sisters? Some day, I hope, I shall be ashamed to have postponed

them to the thought of myself; but I can't pretend to be yet. I could not come to the funeral; I wanted to."

She addressed her question to Mrs. March, who answered: "I can understand. But they were pleased with the flowers you sent; people are, at such times, and they haven't many friends."

"Would you go to see them?" asked the girl. "Would you tell them what I've told you?"

Mrs. March looked at her husband.

"I don't see what good it would do. They wouldn't understand. But if it would relieve you——"

"I'll wait till it isn't a question of self-relief," said the girl. "Good-bye!"

She left them to long debate of the event. At the end Mrs. March said, "She is a strange being; such a mixture of the society girl and the saint."

Her husband answered: "She's the potentiality of several kinds of fanatic. She's very unhappy, and I don't see how she's to be happier about that poor fellow. I shouldn't be surprised if she *did* inspire him to attempt something of that kind."

"Well, you got out of it very well, Basil. I admired the way you managed. I was afraid you'd say something awkward."

"Oh, with a plain line of truth before me, as the only possible thing, I can get on pretty well. When it comes to anything decorative, I'd rather leave it to you, Isabel."

She seemed insensible of his jest. "Of course he

was in love with her. *That* was the light that came into his face when he was going to do what he thought she wanted him to do."

"And she—do you think that she was——"

"What an idea! It would have been perfectly grotesque!"

VIII.

THEIR affliction brought the Dryfooses into humaner relations with the Marches, who had hitherto regarded them as a necessary evil, as the odious means of their own prosperity. Mrs. March found that the women of the family seemed glad of her coming, and in the sense of her usefulness to them all she began to feel a kindness even for Christine. But she could not help seeing that between the girl and her father there was an unsettled account, somehow, and that it was Christine and not the old man who was holding out. She thought that their sorrow had tended to refine the others. Mela was much more subdued, and except when she abandoned herself to a childish interest in her mourning, she did nothing to shock Mrs. March's taste, or to seem unworthy of her grief. She was very good to her mother, whom the blow had left unchanged, and to her father, whom it had apparently fallen upon with crushing weight. Once, after visiting their house, Mrs. March described to March a little scene between Dryfoos and Mela, when he came home from Wall Street, and the girl met him at the door with a kind of country simpleness, and took his hat and stick,

and brought him into the room where Mrs. March sat, looking tired and broken.

She found this look of Dryfoos's pathetic, and dwelt on the sort of stupefaction there was in it; he must have loved his son more than they ever realised. "Yes," said March, "I suspect he did. He's never been about the place since that day; he was always dropping in before, on his way uptown. He seems to go down to Wall Street every day, just as before, but I suppose that's mechanical; he wouldn't know what else to do; I dare say it's best for him. The sanguine Fulkerson is getting a little anxious about the future of *Every Other Week*. Now Conrad's gone, he isn't sure the old man will want to keep on with it, or whether he'll have to look up another Angel. He wants to get married, I imagine, and he can't venture till this point is settled."

"It's a very material point to *us*, too, Basil," said Mrs. March.

"Well, of course. I hadn't overlooked that, you may be sure. One of the things that Fulkerson and I have discussed is a scheme for buying the magazine. Its success is pretty well assured now, and I shouldn't be afraid to put money into it—if I had the money."

"I couldn't let you sell the house in Boston, Basil!"

"And I don't want to. I wish we could go back and live in it, and get the rent too! It would be quite a support. But I suppose if Dryfoos won't keep on, it must come to another Angel. I hope it won't be a literary one, with a fancy for running my department."

"Oh, I guess whoever takes the magazine will be glad enough to keep you!"

"Do you think so? Well, perhaps. But I don't believe Fulkerson would let me stand long between him and an Angel of the right description."

"Well, then, I believe he *would*. And you've never seen anything, Basil, to make you really think that Mr. Fulkerson didn't appreciate you to the utmost."

"I think I came pretty near an undervaluation in that Lindau trouble. I shall always wonder what put a backbone into Fulkerson, just at that crisis. Fulkerson doesn't strike me as the stuff of a moral hero."

"At any rate, he *was* one," said Mrs. March, "and that's quite enough for me."

March did not answer. "What a noble thing life is, anyway! Here I am, well on the way to fifty, after twenty-five years of hard work, looking forward to the potential poor-house as confidently as I did in youth. We might have saved a little more than we have saved; but the little more wouldn't avail if I were turned out of my place now; and we should have lived sordidly to no purpose. Some one always has you by the throat, unless you have some one else in *your* grip. I wonder if that's the attitude the Almighty intended his respectable creatures to take toward one another! I wonder if he meant our civilisation, the battle we fight in, the game we trick in! I wonder if he considers it final, and if the kingdom of heaven on earth, which we pray for——"

"Have you seen Lindau to-day?" Mrs. March asked.

"You inferred it from the quality of my piety?" March laughed, and then suddenly sobered. "Yes, I saw him. It's going rather hard with him, I'm afraid. The amputation doesn't heal very well; the shock was very great, and he's old. It'll take time. There's so much pain that they have to keep him under opiates, and I don't think he fully knew me. At any rate, I didn't get my piety from him to-day."

"It's horrible! Horrible!" said Mrs. March. "I can't get over it! After losing his hand in the war, to lose his whole arm now in *this* way! It does seem too cruel! Of course he oughtn't to have been there; we can say that. But *you* oughtn't to have been there either, Basil."

"Well, I wasn't exactly advising the police to go and club the railroad presidents."

"Neither was poor Conrad Dryfoos."

"I don't deny it. All that was distinctly the chance of life and death. That belonged to God; and no doubt it was law, though it seems chance. But what I object to is this economic chance-world in which we live, and which we men seem to have created. It ought to be law as inflexible in human affairs as the order of day and night in the physical world, that if a man will work he shall both rest and eat, and shall not be harassed with any question as to how his repose and his provision shall come. Nothing less ideal than this satisfies the reason.

But in our state of things no one is secure of this. No one is sure of finding work; no one is sure of not losing it. I may have my work taken away from me at any moment by the caprice, the mood, the indigestion of a man who has not the qualification for knowing whether I do it well or ill. At my time of life—at every time of life—a man ought to feel that if he will keep on doing his duty he shall not suffer in himself or in those who are dear to him, except through natural causes. But no man can feel this as things are now; and so we go on, pushing and pulling, climbing and crawling, thrusting aside and trampling underfoot; lying, cheating, stealing; and when we get to the end, covered with blood and dirt and sin and shame, and look back over the way we've come to a palace of our own, or the poor-house, which is about the only possession we can claim in common with our brother-men, I don't think the retrospect can be pleasing."

"I know, I know!" said his wife. "I think of those things too, Basil. Life isn't what it seems when you look forward to it. But I think people would suffer less, and wouldn't have to work so hard, and could make all reasonable provision for the future, if they were not so greedy and so foolish."

"Oh, without doubt! We can't put it all on the conditions; we must put some of the blame on character. But conditions *make* character; and people are greedy and foolish, and wish to have and to shine, because having and shining are held up to

them by civilisation as the chief good of life. We all know they are not the chief good, perhaps not good at all; but if some one ventures to say so, all the rest of us call him a fraud and a crank, and go moiling and toiling on to the palace or the poor-house. We can't help it. If one were less greedy, or less foolish, some one else would have, and would shine at his expense. We don't moil and toil to ourselves alone; the palace or the poor-house is not merely for ourselves, but for our children, whom we've brought up in the superstition that having and shining is the chief good. We dare not teach them otherwise, for fear they may falter in the fight, when it comes their turn; and the children of others will crowd them out of the palace into the poor-house. If we felt sure that honest work shared by all would bring them honest food shared by all, some heroic few of us, who did not wish our children to rise above their fellows—though we could not bear to have them fall below—might trust them with the truth. But we have no such assurance; and so we go on trembling before Dryfooses, and living in gimerackereries."

"Basil, Basil! I was always willing to live more simply than you. You know I was!"

"I know you always said so, my dear. But how many bell-ratchets and speaking-tubes would you be willing to have at the street door below? I remember that when we were looking for a flat you rejected every building that had a bell-ratchet or a speaking-tube, and would have nothing to do with any that had more than an electric button; you

wanted a hall-boy, with electric buttons all over him. I don't blame you. I find such things quite as necessary as you do."

"And do you mean to say, Basil," she asked, abandoning this unprofitable branch of the inquiry, "that you are really uneasy about your place? that you are afraid Mr. Dryfoos may give up being an Angel, and Mr. Fulkerson may play you false?"

"Play me false? Oh, it wouldn't be playing me false. It would be merely looking out for himself, if the new Angel had editorial tastes, and wanted my place. It's what any one would do."

"You wouldn't do it, Basil!"

"Wouldn't I? Well, if any one offered me more salary than *Every Other Week* pays—say twice as much—what do you think my duty to my suffering family would be? It's give and take in the business world, Isabel; especially take. But as to being uneasy, I'm not, in the least. I've the spirit of a lion, when it comes to such a chance as that. When I see how readily the sensibilities of the passing stranger can be worked in New York, I think of taking up the rôle of that desperate man on Third Avenue, who went along looking for garbage in the gutter to eat. I think I could pick up at least twenty or thirty cents a day by that little game, and maintain my family in the affluence it's been accustomed to."

"*Basil!*" cried his wife. "You don't mean to say that man was an impostor! And I've gone about, ever since, feeling that one such case in a

million, the bare possibility of it, was enough to justify all that Lindau said about the rich and the poor !”

March laughed teasingly. “Oh, I don’t say he was an impostor. Perhaps he really was hungry ; but if he wasn’t, what do you think of a civilisation that makes the opportunity of such a fraud ? that gives us all such a bad conscience for the need which is, that we weaken to the need that isn’t ? Suppose that poor fellow wasn’t personally founded on fact : nevertheless, he represented the truth ; he was the ideal of the suffering which would be less effective if realistically treated. That man is a great comfort to me. He probably rioted for days on that quarter I gave him ; made a dinner very likely, or a champagne supper ; and if *Every Other Week* wants to get rid of me, I intend to work that racket. You can hang round the corner with Bella, and Tom can come up to me in tears, at stated intervals, and ask me if I’ve found anything yet. To be sure, we might be arrested and sent up somewhere. But even in that extreme case we should be provided for. Oh no, I’m not afraid of losing my place ! I’ve merely a sort of psychological curiosity to know how men like Dryfoos and Fulkerson will work out the problem before them.”

IX.

It was a curiosity which Fulkerson himself shared, at least concerning Dryfoos. "I don't know what the old man's going to do," he said to March, the day after the Marches had talked their future over. "Said anything to you yet?"

"No, not a word."

"You're anxious, I suppose, same as I am. Fact is," said Fulkerson, blushing a little, "I can't ask to have a day named till I know where I am in connection with the old man. I can't tell whether I've got to look out for something else, or somebody else. Of course, it's full soon yet."

"Yes," March said, "much sooner than it seems to us. We're so anxious about the future that we don't remember how very recent the past is."

"That's something so. The old man's hardly had time yet to pull himself together. Well, I'm glad you feel that way about it, March. I guess it's more of a blow to him than we realise. He was a good deal bound up in Coonrod, though he didn't always use him very well. Well, I reckon it's apt to happen so oftentimes; curious how cruel love can be. Heigh? We're an awful mixture, March!"

"Yes, that's the marvel and the curse, as Browning says."

"Why, that poor boy himself," pursued Fulkerson, "had streaks of the mule in him that could give odds to Beaton, and he must have tried the old man by the way he would give in to his will, and hold out against his judgment. I don't believe he ever budged a hair's-breadth from his original position about wanting to be a preacher and not wanting to be a business man. Well, of course! I don't think business is all in all; but it must have made the old man mad to find that without saying anything, or doing anything to show it, and after seeming to come over to his ground, and really coming, practically, Coonrod was just exactly where he first planted himself, every time."

"Yes, people that have convictions are difficult. Fortunately, they're rare."

"Do you think so? It seems to me that everybody's got convictions. Beaton himself, who hasn't a principle to throw at a dog, has got convictions the size of a barn. They ain't always the same ones, I know, but they're always to the same effect, as far as Beaton's being Number One is concerned. The old man's got convictions—or did have, unless this thing lately has shaken him all up—and he believes that money will do everything. Colonel Woodburn's got convictions that he wouldn't part with for untold millions. Why, March, you got convictions yourself!"

"Have I?" said March. "I don't know what they are."

"Well, neither do I ; but I know you were ready to kick the trough over for them when the old man wanted us to bounce Lindau that time."

"Oh yes," said March ; he remembered the fact ; but he was still uncertain just what the convictions were that he had been so staunch for.

"I suppose we could have got along without you," Fulkerson mused aloud. "It's astonishing how you always *can* get along in this world without the man that is simply indispensable. Makes a fellow realise that he could take a day off now and then without deranging the solar system a great deal. Now here's Coonrod—or rather, he isn't. But that boy managed his part of the schooner so well that I used to tremble when I thought of his getting the better of the old man, and going into a convent or something of that kind ; and now here he is, snuffed out in half a second, and I don't believe but what we shall be sailing along just as chipper as usual inside of thirty days. I reckon it will bring the old man to the point when I come to talk with him about who's to be put in Coonrod's place. I don't like very well to start the subject with him ; but it's got to be done some time."

"Yes," March admitted. "It's terrible to think how unnecessary even the best and wisest of us is to the purposes of Providence. When I looked at that poor young fellow's face sometimes—so gentle and true and pure—I used to think the world was appreciably richer for his being in it. But are we appreciably poorer for his being out of it now ?"

"No, I don't reckon we are," said Fulkerson. "And what a lot of the raw material of all kinds the Almighty must have, to *waste* us the way he seems to do. Think of throwing away a precious creature like Coonrod Dryfoos on one chance in a thousand of getting that old fool of a Lindau out of the way of being clubbed! For I suppose that was what Coonrod was up to. Say! Have you been round to see Lindau to-day?"

Something in the tone or the manner of Fulkerson startled March. "No! I haven't seen him since yesterday."

"Well, I don't know," said Fulkerson. "I guess I saw him a little while after you did, and that young doctor there seemed to feel kind of worried about him. Or not worried, exactly; they can't afford to let such things worry them, I suppose; but——"

"He's worse?" asked March.

"Oh, he didn't say so. But I just wondered if you'd seen him to-day."

"I think I'll go now," said March, with a pang at heart. He had gone every day to see Lindau, but this day he had thought he would not go, and that was why his heart smote him. He knew that if he were in Lindau's place Lindau would never have left his side if he could have helped it. March tried to believe that the case was the same, as it stood now; it seemed to him that he was always going to or from the hospital; he said to himself that it must do Lindau harm to be visited so much. But he

knew that this was not true when he was met at the door of the ward where Lindau lay by the young doctor, who had come to feel a personal interest in March's interest in Lindau.

He smiled without gaiety, and said, "He's just going."

"What! Discharged?"

"Oh no. He has been failing very fast since you saw him yesterday, and now——" They had been walking softly and talking softly down the aisle between the long rows of beds. "Would you care to see him?"

The doctor made a slight gesture toward the white canvas screen which in such places forms the death-chamber of the poor and friendless. "Come round this way—he won't know you! I've got rather fond of the poor old fellow. He wouldn't have a clergyman—sort of agnostic, isn't he? A good many of these Germans are—but the young lady who's been coming to see him——"

They both stopped. Lindau's grand, patriarchal head, foreshortened to their view, lay white upon the pillow, and his broad white beard flowed out over the sheet, which heaved with those long last breaths. Beside his bed Margaret Vance was kneeling; her veil was thrown back, and her face was lifted; she held clasped between her hands the hand of the dying man; she moved her lips inaudibly.

X.

IN spite of the experience of the whole race from time immemorial, when death comes to any one we know we helplessly regard it as an incident of life, which will presently go on as before. Perhaps this is an instinctive perception of the truth that it does go on somewhere ; but we have a sense of death as absolutely the end even for earth, only if it relates to some one remote or indifferent to us. March tried to project Lindau to the necessary distance from himself in order to realise the fact in his case, but he could not, though the man with whom his youth had been associated in a poetic friendship had not actually re-entered the region of his affection to the same degree, or in any like degree. The changed conditions forbade that. He had a soreness of heart concerning him ; but he could not make sure whether this soreness was grief for his death, or remorse for his own uncandour with him about Dryfoos, or a foreboding of that accounting with his conscience which he knew his wife would now exact of him down to the last minutest particular of their joint and several behaviour toward Lindau ever since they had met him in New York.

He felt something knock against his shoulder, and he looked up to have his hat struck from his head by a horse's nose. He saw the horse put his foot on the hat, and he reflected, "Now it will always look like an accordion," and he heard the horse's driver address him some sarcasms before he could fully awaken to the situation. He was standing bare-headed in the middle of Fifth Avenue, and blocking the tide of carriages flowing in either direction. Among the faces put out of the carriage windows he saw that of Dryfoos looking from a coupé. The old man knew him, and said, "Jump in here, Mr. March"; and March, who had mechanically picked up his hat, and was thinking, "Now I shall have to tell Isabel about this at once, and she will never trust me on the street again without her," mechanically obeyed. Her confidence in him had been undermined by his being so near Conrad when he was shot; and it went through his mind that he would get Dryfoos to drive him to a hatter's, where he could buy a new hat, and not be obliged to confess his narrow escape to his wife till the incident was some days old and she could bear it better. It quite drove Lindau's death out of his mind for the moment; and when Dryfoos said if he was going home he would drive up to the first cross-street and turn back with him, March said he would be glad if he would take him to a hat-store. The old man put his head out again and told the driver to take them to the Fifth Avenue Hotel. "There's a hat-store around there somewhere, seems to me," he said; and they

talked of March's accident as well as they could in the rattle and clatter of the street till they reached the place. March got his hat, passing a joke with the hatter about the impossibility of pressing his old hat over again, and came out to thank Dryfoos and take leave of him.

"If you ain't in any great hurry," the old man said, "I wish you'd get in here a minute. I'd like to have a little talk with you."

"Oh, certainly," said March, and he thought: "It's coming now about what he intends to do with *Every Other Week*. Well, I might as well have all the misery at once and have it over."

Dryfoos called up to his driver, who bent his head down sidewise to listen: "Go over there on Madison Avenue, onto that asphalte, and keep drivin' up and down till I stop you. I can't hear myself think on these pavements," he said to March. But after they got upon the asphalte, and began smoothly rolling over it, he seemed in no haste to begin. At last he said, "I wanted to talk with you about that—that Dutchman that was at my dinner—Lindau," and March's heart gave a jump with wonder whether he could have already heard of Lindau's death; but in an instant he perceived that this was impossible. "I been talkin' with Fulkerson about him, and he says they had to take the balance of his arm off."

March nodded; it seemed to him he could not speak. He could not make out from the close face of the old man anything of his motive. It was set, but set as a piece of broken mechanism is when it

has lost the power to relax itself. There was no other history in it of what the man had passed through in his son's death.

"I don't know," Dryfoos resumed, looking aside at the cloth window-strap, which he kept fingering, "as you quite understood what made me the maddest. I didn't tell him I could talk Dutch, because I can't keep it up with a regular German; but my father was Pennsylvania Dutch, and I could understand what he was saying to you about me. I know I had no business to understand it, after I let him think I couldn't; but I did, and I didn't like very well to have a man callin' me a traitor and a tyrant at my own table. Well, I look at it differently now, and I reckon I had better have tried to put up with it; and I would, if I could have known——" He stopped with a quivering lip, and then went on. "Then, again, I didn't like his talkin' that paternalism of his. I always heard it was the worst kind of thing for the country; I was brought up to think the best government was the one that governs the least; and I didn't want to hear that kind of talk from a man that was livin' on my money. I couldn't bear it from him. Or I thought I couldn't before——before——" He stopped again, and gulped. "I reckon now there ain't anything I couldn't bear."

March was moved by the blunt words and the mute stare forward with which they ended. "Mr. Dryfoos, I didn't know that you understood Lindau's German, or I shouldn't have allowed him—he wouldn't have allowed himself—to go on. He

wouldn't have knowingly abused his position of guest to censure you, no matter how much he condemned you."

"I don't care for it now," said Dryfoos. "It's all past and gone, as far as I'm concerned; but I wanted you to see that I wasn't tryin' to punish him for his opinions, as you said."

"No; I see now," March assented, though he thought his position still justified. "I wish——"

"I don't know as I understand much about his opinions, anyway; but I ain't ready to say I want the men dependent on me to manage my business for me. I always tried to do the square thing by my hands; and in that particular case out there, I took on all the old hands just as fast as they left their Union. As for the game I came on them, it was dog eat dog, anyway."

March could have laughed to think how far this old man was from even conceiving of Lindau's point of view, and how he was saying the worst of himself that Lindau could have said of him. No one could have characterised the kind of thing he had done more severely than he when he called it dog eat dog.

"There's a great deal to be said on both sides," March began, hoping to lead up through this generality to the fact of Lindau's death; but the old man went on—

"Well, all I wanted him to know is that I wasn't trying to punish him for what he said about things in general. You naturally got that idea, I reckon; but I always went in for lettin' people say what

they please and think what they please; it's the only way in a free country."

"I'm afraid, Mr. Dryfoos, that it would make little difference to Lindau now——"

"I don't suppose he bears malice for it," said Dryfoos, "but what I want to do is to have him told so. He could understand just why I didn't want to be called hard names, and yet I didn't object to his thinkin' whatever he pleased. I'd like him to know——"

"No one can speak to him, no one can tell him," March began again, but again Dryfoos prevented him from going on.

"I understand it's a delicate thing; and I'm not askin' you to do it. What I would really like to do—if you think he could be prepared for it, some way, and could stand it—would be to go to him myself, and tell him just what the trouble was. I'm in hopes, if I done that, he could see how I felt about it."

A picture of Dryfoos going to the dead Lindau with his vain regrets presented itself to March, and he tried once more to make the old man understand. "Mr. Dryfoos," he said, "Lindau is past all that for ever," and he felt the ghastly comedy of it when Dryfoos continued, without heeding him—

"I got a particular reason why I want him to believe it wasn't his ideas I objected to—them ideas of his about the government carryin' everything on and givin' work. I don't understand 'em exactly, but I found a writin'—among—my son's—things"

(he seemed to force the words through his teeth), "and I reckon he—thought—that way. Kind of a diary—where he—put down—his thoughts. My son and me—we differed about a good—many things." His chin shook, and from time to time he stopped. "I wasn't very good to him, I reckon; I crossed him where I guess I got no business to crossed him; but I thought everything of—Coonrod. He was the best boy, from a baby, that ever was; just so patient and mild, and done whatever he was told. I ought to 'a' let him been a preacher! O my son, my son!" The sobs could not be kept back any longer; they shook the old man with a violence that made March afraid for him; but he controlled himself at last with a series of hoarse sounds like barks. "Well, it's all past and gone! But as I understand you from what you saw, when—Coonrod—was—killed, he was tryin' to save that old man from trouble?"

"Yes, yes! It seemed so to me."

"That'll do, then! I want you to have him come back and write for the book when he gets well. I want you to find out and let me know if there's anything I can do for him. I'll feel as if I done it—for my—son. I'll take him into my own house, and do for him there, if you say so, when he gets so he can be moved. I'll wait on him myself. It's what Coonrod 'd do, if he was here. I don't feel any hardness to him because it was him that got Coonrod killed, as you might say, in one sense of the term; but I've tried to think it out, and I feel like I was all the more beholden to him because my son died

tryin' to save him. Whatever I do, I'll be doin' it for Coonrod, and that's enough for me." He seemed to have finished, and he turned to March as if to hear what he had to say.

March hesitated. "I'm afraid, Mr. Dryfoos—— Didn't Fulkerson tell you that Lindau was very sick!"

"Yes, of course. But he's all right, he said."

Now it had to come, though the fact had been latterly playing fast and loose with March's consciousness. Something almost made him smile; the willingness he had once felt to give this old man pain; then he consoled himself by thinking that at least he was not obliged to meet Dryfoos's wish to make atonement with the fact that Lindau had renounced him, and would on no terms work for such a man as he, or suffer any kindness from him. In this light Lindau seemed the harder of the two, and March had the momentary force to say: "Mr. Dryfoos—it can't be. Lindau—I have just come from him—is dead."

XI.

“How did he take it? How could he bear it? O Basil! I wonder you could have the heart to say it to him. It was cruel!”

“Yes, cruel enough, my dear,” March owned to his wife, when they talked the matter over on his return home. He could not wait till the children were out of the way, and afterward neither he nor his wife was sorry that he had spoken of it before them. The girl cried plentifully for her old friend who was dead, and said she hated Mr. Dryfoos, and then was sorry for him, too; and the boy listened to all, and spoke with a serious sense that pleased his father. “But as to how he took it,” March went on to answer his wife’s question about Dryfoos, “how do any of us take a thing that hurts? Some of us cry out, and some of us—don’t. Dryfoos drew a kind of long, quivering breath, as a child does when it grieves—there’s something curiously simple and primitive about him—and didn’t say anything. After a while he asked me how he could see the people at the hospital about the remains; I gave him my card to the young doctor there that had charge of Lindau. I suppose he was still carrying

forward his plan of reparation in his mind—to the dead for the dead. But how useless! If he could have taken the living Lindau home with him, and cared for him all his days, what would it have profited the gentle creature whose life his worldly ambition vexed and thwarted here? He might as well offer a sacrifice at Conrad's grave. Children," said March, turning to them, "death is an exile that no remorse and no love can reach. Remember that, and be good to every one here on earth, for your longing to retrieve any harshness or unkindness to the dead will be the very ecstasy of anguish to you. I wonder," he mused, "if one of the reasons why we're shut up to our ignorance of what is to be hereafter isn't that we should be still more brutal to one another here, in the hope of making reparation somewhere else. Perhaps, if we ever come to obey the law of love on earth, the mystery of death will be taken away."

"Well"—the ancestral Puritanism spoke in Mrs. March—"these two old men have been terribly punished. They have both been violent and wilful, and they have both been punished. No one need ever tell *me* there is not a moral government of the universe!"

March always disliked to hear her talk in this way, which did both her head and heart injustice. "And Conrad," he said, "what was *he* punished for?"

"He?" she answered, in an exaltation; "he suffered for the sins of others."

"Ah, well, if you put it in that way, yes. That goes on continually. That's another mystery."

He fell to brooding on it, and presently he heard his son saying, "I suppose, papa, that Mr. Lindau died in a bad cause?"

March was startled. He had always been so sorry for Lindau, and admired his courage and generosity so much, that he had never fairly considered this question. "Why, yes," he answered; "he died in the cause of disorder; he was trying to obstruct the law. No doubt there was a wrong there, an inconsistency and an injustice that he felt keenly; but it could not be reached in his way without greater wrong."

"Yes; that's what I thought," said the boy. "And what's the use of our ever fighting about anything in America? I always thought we could vote anything we wanted."

"We can, if we're honest, and don't buy and sell one another's votes," said his father. "And men like Lindau, who renounce the American means as hopeless, and let their love of justice hurry them into sympathy with violence, yes, they are wrong; and poor Lindau did die in a bad cause, as you say, Tom."

"I think Conrad had no business there, or you either, Basil," said his wife.

"Oh, I don't defend myself," said March. "I was there in the cause of literary curiosity and of conjugal disobedience. But Conrad—yes, he had some business there: it was his business to suffer

there for the sins of others. Isabel, we can't throw aside that old doctrine of the Atonement yet. The life of Christ, it wasn't only in healing the sick and going about to do good ; it was suffering for the sins of others ! That's as great a mystery as the mystery of death. Why should there be such a principle in the world ? But it's been felt, and more or less dumbly, blindly recognised ever since Calvary. If we love mankind, pity them, we even *wish* to suffer for them. That's what has created the religious orders in all times—the brotherhoods and sisterhoods that belong to our day as much as to the mediæval past. That's what is driving a girl like Margaret Vance, who has everything that the world can offer her young beauty, on to the work of a Sister of Charity among the poor and the dying."

"Yes, yes !" cried Mrs. March. "How—how did she look there, Basil ?" She had her feminine misgivings ; she was not sure but the girl was something of a *poseuse*, and enjoyed the picturesqueness, as well as the pain ; and she wished to be convinced that it was not so.

"Well," she said, when March had told again the little there was to tell, "I suppose it must be a great trial to a woman like Mrs. Horn to have her niece going that way."

"The way of Chris' ?" asked March, with a smile.

"Oh, Christ came into the world to teach us how to live rightly in it, too. If we were all to spend

our time in hospitals, it would be rather dismal for the homes. But perhaps you don't think the homes are worth minding?" she suggested, with a certain note in her voice that he knew.

He got up and kissed her. "I think the gim-crackeries are." He took the hat he had set down on the parlour table on coming in, and started to put it in the hall, and that made her notice it.

"You've been getting a new hat!"

"Yes," he hesitated; "the old one had got—was decidedly shabby."

"Well, that's right. I don't like you to wear them too long. Did you leave the old one to be pressed?"

"Well, the latter seemed to think it was hardly worth pressing," said March. He decided that for the present his wife's nerves had quite all they could bear.

XII.

It was in a manner grotesque, but to March it was all the more natural for that reason, that Dryfoos should have Lindau's funeral from his house. He knew the old man to be darkly groping, through the payment of these vain honours to the dead, for some atonement to his son, and he imagined him finding in them such comfort as comes from doing all one can, even when all is useless.

No one knew what Lindau's religion was, and in default they had had the Anglican burial service read over him ; it seems the refuge of all the homeless dead. Mrs. Dryfoos came down for the ceremony. She understood that it was for Coonrod's sake that his father wished the funeral to be there ; and she confided to Mrs. March that she believed Coonrod would have been pleased. " Coonrod was a member of the 'Piscopal Church ; and fawther's doin' the whole thing for Coonrod as much as for anybody. He thought the world of Coonrod, fawther did. Mela, she kind of thought it would look queer to have two funerals from the same house, hand-runnin', as you might call it, and one of 'em no relation, either ; but when she saw how

fawther was bent on it, she give in. Seems as if she was tryin' to make up to fawther for Coonrod as much as she could. Mela always was a good child, but nobody can ever come up to Coonrod."

March felt all the grotesqueness, the hopeless absurdity of Dryfoos's endeavour at atonement in these vain obsequies to the man for whom he believed his son to have died; but the effort had its magnanimity, its pathos, and there was a poetry that appealed to him in this reconciliation through death of men, of ideas, of conditions, that could only have gone warring on in life. He thought, as the priest went on with the solemn liturgy, how all the world must come together in that peace which, struggle and strive as we may, shall claim us at last. He looked at Dryfoos, and wondered whether he would consider these rites a sufficient tribute, or whether there was enough in him to make him realise their futility, except as a mere sign of his wish to retrieve the past. He thought how we never can atone for the wrong we do; the heart we have grieved and wounded cannot kindle with pity for us when once it is stilled; and yet we can put our evil from us with penitence; and somehow, somewhere, the order of loving-kindness, which our passion or our wilfulness has disturbed, will be restored.

Dryfoos, through Fulkerson, had asked all the more intimate contributors of *Every Other Week* to come. Beaton was absent, but Fulkerson had brought Miss Woodburn, with her father, and Mrs.

Leighton and Alma, to fill up, as he said. Mela was much present, and was official with the arrangement of the flowers and the welcome of the guests. She imparted this impersonality to her reception of Kendricks, whom Fulkerson met in the outer hall with his party, and whom he presented in whisper to them all. Kendricks smiled under his breath, as it were, and was then mutely and seriously polite to the Leightons. Alma brought a little bunch of flowers, which were lost in the presence of those which Dryfoos had ordered to be unsparingly provided.

It was a kind of satisfaction to Mela to have Miss Vance come, and reassuring as to how it would look to have the funeral there; Miss Vance would certainly not have come unless it had been all right; she had come, and had sent some Easter lilies.

"Ain't Christine coming down?" Fulkerson asked Mela.

"No, she ain't a bit well, and she ain't been, ever since Coonrod died. I don't know what's got over her," said Mela. She added, "Well, I should 'a' thought Mr. Beaton would 'a' made out to 'a' come!"

"Beaton's peculiar," said Fulkerson. "If he thinks you want him he takes a pleasure in not letting you have him."

"Well, goodness knows, *I* don't want him," said the girl.

Christine kept her room, and for the most part kept her bed; but there seemed nothing definitely the matter with her, and she would not let them

call a doctor. Her mother said she reckoned she was beginning to feel the spring weather, that always perfectly pulled a body down in New York ; and Mela said if being as cross as two sticks was any sign of spring-fever, Christine had it bad. She was faithfully kind to her, and submitted to all her humours, but she recompensed herself by the freest criticism of Christine when not in actual attendance on her. Christine would not suffer Mrs. Mandel to approach her, and she had with her father a sullen submission which was not resignation. For her, apparently, Conrad had not died, or had died in vain.

"Pshaw!" said Mela, one morning when she came to breakfast, "I reckon if we was to send up an old card of Mr. Beaton's she'd rattle downstairs fast enough. If she's sick, she's love-sick. It makes *me* sick to *see* her."

Mela was talking to Mrs. Mandel, but her father looked up from his plate, and listened. Mela went on: "*I* don't know what's made the fellow quit comun'. But he *was* an aggravatun' thing, and no more dependable than water. It's just like Mr. Fulkerson said, if he thinks you want him he'll take a pleasure in not lettun' you have him. I reckon that's what's the matter with Christine. I believe in my heart the girl'll die if she don't git him."

Mela went on to eat her breakfast with her own good appetite. She now always came down to keep her father company, as she said, and she did her

best to cheer and comfort him. At least she kept the talk going, and she had it nearly all to herself, for Mrs Mandel was now merely staying on provisionally, and in the absence of any regrets or excuses from Christine, was looking ruefully forward to the moment when she must leave even this ungente home for the chances of the ruder world outside.

The old man said nothing at table, but when Mela went up to see if she could do anything for Christine, he asked Mrs. Mandel again about all the facts of her last interview with Beaton.

She gave them as fully as she could remember them, and the old man made no comment on them. But he went out directly after, and at *Every Other Week* office he climbed the stairs to Fulkerson's room, and asked for Beaton's address. No one yet had taken charge of Conrad's work, and Fulkerson was running the thing himself, as he said, till he could talk with Dryfoos about it. The old man would not look into the empty room where he had last seen his son alive; he turned his face away, and hurried by the door.

XIII.

THE course of public events carried Beaton's private affairs beyond the reach of his simple first intention to renounce his connection with *Every Other Week*. In fact this was not perhaps so simple as it seemed, and long before it could be put in effect it appeared still simpler to do nothing about the matter: to remain passive and leave the initiative to Dryfoos, to maintain the dignity of unconsciousness and let recognition of any change in the situation come from those who had caused the change. After all, it was rather absurd to propose making a purely personal question the pivot on which his relations with *Every Other Week* turned. He took a hint from March's position and decided that he did not know Dryfoos in these relations; he only knew Fulkerson, who had certainly had nothing to do with Mrs. Mandel's asking his intentions. As he reflected upon this he became less eager to look Fulkerson up and make the magazine a partner of his own sufferings. This was the soberer mood to which Beaton trusted that night even before he slept, and he awoke fully confirmed in it. As he examined the offence done him in the cold light of

day, he perceived that it had not come either from Mrs. Mandel, who was visibly the faltering and unwilling instrument of it, or from Christine, who was altogether ignorant of it, but from Dryfoos, whom he could not hurt by giving up his place. He could only punish Fulkerson by that, and Fulkerson was innocent. Justice and interest alike dictated the passive course to which Beaton inclined ; and he reflected that he might safely leave the punishment of Dryfoos to Christine, who would find out what had happened, and would be able to take care of herself in any encounter of tempers with her father.

Beaton did not go to the office during the week that followed upon this conclusion ; but they were used there to these sudden absences of his, and as his work for the time was in train, nothing was made of his staying away, except the sarcastic comment which the thought of him was apt to excite in the literary department. He no longer came so much to the Leightons, and Fulkerson was in no state of mind to miss any one there except Miss Woodburn, whom he never missed. Beaton was left, then, unmolestedly awaiting the course of destiny, when he read in the morning paper, over his coffee at Maroni's, the deeply scare-headed story of Conrad's death and the clubbing of Lindau. He probably cared as little for either of them as any man that ever saw them ; but he felt a shock if not a pang at Conrad's fate, so out of keeping with his life and character. He did not know what to do ; and he did nothing. He was not asked to the

funeral, but he had not expected that, and when Fulkerson brought him notice that Lindau was also to be buried from Dryfoos's house, it was without his usual sullen vindictiveness that he kept away. In his sort, and as much as a man could who was necessarily so much taken up with himself, he was sorry for Conrad's father; Beaton had a peculiar tenderness for his own father, and he imagined how his father would feel if it were he who had been killed in Conrad's place, as it might very well have been; he sympathised with himself in view of the possibility; and for once they were mistaken who thought him indifferent and merely brutal in his failure to appear at Lindau's obsequies.

He would really have gone if he had known how to reconcile his presence in that house with the terms of his effective banishment from it; and he was rather forgivingly finding himself wronged in the situation, when Dryfoos knocked at the studio door the morning after Lindau's funeral. Beaton roared out "Come in!" as he always did to a knock if he had not a model: if he had a model he set the door slightly ajar, and with his palette on his thumb frowned at his visitor, and told him he could not come in. Dryfoos fumbled about for the knob in the dim passageway outside, and Beaton, who had experience of people's difficulties with it, suddenly jerked the door open. The two men stood confronted, and at first sight of each other their quiescent dislike revived. Each would have been willing to turn away from the other, but that

was not possible. Beaton snorted some sort of inarticulate salutation, which Dryfoos did not try to return; he asked if he could see him alone for a minute or two, and Beaton bade him come in, and swept some paint-blotched rags from the chair which he told him to take. He noticed, as the old man sank tremulously into it, that his movement was like that of his own father, and also that he looked very much like Christine. Dryfoos folded his hands tremulously on the top of his horn-handled stick, and he was rather finely haggard, with the dark hollows round his black eyes, and the fall of the muscles on either side of his chin. He had forgotten to take his soft, wide-brimmed hat off; and Beaton felt a desire to sketch him just as he sat.

Dryfoos suddenly pulled himself together from the dreary absence into which he fell at first. "Young man," he began, "may be I've come here on a fool's errand," and Beaton rather fancied that beginning.

But it embarrassed him a little, and he said, with a shy glance aside, "I don't know what you mean."

"I reckon," Dryfoos answered quietly, "you got your notion, though. I set that woman on to speak to you the way she done. But if there was anything wrong in the way she spoke; or if you didn't feel like she had any right to question you up as if we suspected you of anything mean, I want you to say so."

Beaton said nothing and the old man went on.

"I ain't very well up in the ways of the world,

and I don't pretend to be. All I want is to be fair and square with everybody. I've made mistakes, though, in my time——" He stopped, and Beaton was not proof against the misery of his face, which was twisted as with some strong physical ache. "I don't know as I want to make any more, if I can help it. I don't know but what you had a right to keep on comin', and if you had I want you to say so. Don't you be afraid but what I'll take it in the right way. I don't want to take advantage of anybody; and I don't ask you to say any more than that."

Beaton did not find the humiliation of the man who had humiliated him so sweet as he could have fancied it might be. He knew how it had come about, and that it was an effect of love for his child; it did not matter by what ungracious means she had brought him to know that he loved her better than his own will, that his wish for her happiness was stronger than his pride; it was enough that he was now somehow brought to give proof of it. Beaton could not be aware of all that dark coil of circumstance through which Dryfoos's present action evolved itself; the worst of this was buried in the secret of the old man's heart, a worm of perpetual torment. What was apparent to another was that he was broken by the sorrow that had fallen upon him, and it was this that Beaton respected and pitied in his impulse to be frank and kind in his answer.

"No, I had no right to keep coming to your house in the way I did, unless—unless I meant more than I ever said." Beaton added, "I don't say that what

you did was usual—in this country, at any rate ; but I can't say you were wrong. Since you speak to me about the matter, it's only fair to myself to say that a good deal goes on in life without much thinking of consequences. That's the way I excuse myself."

"And you say Mrs. Mandel done right?" asked Dryfoos, as if he wished simply to be assured of a point of etiquette.

"Yes, she did right. I've nothing to complain of."

"That's all I wanted to know," said Dryfoos ; but apparently he had not finished, and he did not go, though the silence that Beaton now kept gave him a chance to do so. He began a series of questions which had no relation to the matter in hand, though they were strictly personal to Beaton. "What countryman are you?" he asked, after a moment.

"What countryman?" Beaton frowned back at him.

"Yes, are you an American by birth?"

"Yes ; I was born in Syracuse."

"Protestant?"

"My father is a Scotch Seceder."

"What business is your father in?"

Beaton faltered and blushed ; then he answered, "He's in the monument business, as he calls it. He's a tombstone cutter." Now that he was launched, Beaton saw no reason for not declaring, "My father's always been a poor man, and worked with his own hands for his living." He had too slight esteem socially for Dryfoos to conceal a fact

from him that he might have wished to blink with others.

"Well, that's right," said Dryfoos. "I used to farm it myself. I've got a good pile of money together, now. At first it didn't come easy; but now it's got started it pours in and *pours* in; it seems like there was no end to it. I've got well on to three million; but it couldn't keep me from losin' my son. It can't buy me back a minute of his life; not all the money in the world can do it!"

He grieved this out as if to himself rather than to Beaton, who scarcely ventured to say, "I know—I am very sorry——"

"How did you come," Dryfoos interrupted, "to take up paintin'?"

"Well, I don't know," said Beaton, a little scornfully. "You don't take a thing of that kind up, I fancy. I always wanted to paint."

"Father try to stop you?"

"No. It wouldn't have been of any use. Why——"

"My son, he wanted to be a preacher, and I did stop *him*—or I thought I did. But I reckon he was a preacher, all the same, every minute of his life. As you say, it ain't any use to try to stop a thing like that. I reckon if a child has got any particular bent, it was given to it; and it's goin' against the grain, it's goin' against the law, to try to bend it some other way. There's lots of good business men Mr. Beaton, twenty of 'em to every good preacher?"

"I imagine more than twenty," said Beaton,

amused and touched through his curiosity as to what the old man was driving at by the quaint simplicity of his speculations.

"Father ever come to the city?"

"No; he never has the time; and my mother's an invalid."

"Oh! Brothers and sisters?"

"Yes; we're a large family."

"I lost two little fellers—twins," said Dryfoos sadly. "But we hain't ever had but just the five. Ever take portraits?"

"Yes," said Beaton, meeting this zigzag in the queries as seriously as the rest. "I don't think I am good at it."

Dryfoos got to his feet. "I wished you'd paint a likeness of my son. You've seen him plenty of times. We won't fight about the price, don't you be afraid of that."

Beaton was astonished, and in a mistaken way he was disgusted. He saw that Dryfoos was trying to undo Mrs. Mandel's work practically, and get him to come again to his house; that he now conceived of the offence given him as condoned, and wished to restore the former situation. He knew that he was attempting this for Christine's sake, but he was not the man to imagine that Dryfoos was trying not only to tolerate him but to like him; and in fact Dryfoos was not wholly conscious himself of this end. What they both understood was that Dryfoos was endeavouring to get at Beaton through Conrad's memory; but with one this was its dedication to a

purpose of self-sacrifice and with the other a vulgar and shameless use of it.

"I couldn't do it," said Beaton. "I couldn't think of attempting it."

"Why not?" Dryfoos persisted. "We got some photographs of him; he didn't like to sit very well; but his mother got him to; and you know how he looked."

"I couldn't do it—I couldn't. I can't even consider it. I'm very sorry. I would, if it were possible. But it isn't possible."

"I reckon if you see the photographs once——"

"It isn't that, Mr. Dryfoos. But I'm not in the way of that kind of thing any more."

"I'd give any price you've a mind to name——"

"Oh, it isn't the money!" cried Beaton, beginning to lose control of himself.

The old man did not notice him. He sat with his head fallen forward, and his chin resting on his folded hands. Thinking of the portrait, he saw Conrad's face before him, reproachful, astonished, but all gentle as it looked when Conrad caught his hand that day after he struck him; he heard him say, "Father!" and the sweat gathered on his forehead. "O my God!" he groaned. "No; there ain't anything I can do now."

Beaton did not know whether Dryfoos was speaking to him or not. He started toward him: "Are you ill?"

"No, there ain't anything the matter," said the old man. "But I guess I'll lay down on your settee

a minute." He tottered with Beaton's help to the æsthetic couch covered with a tiger-skin, on which Beaton had once thought of painting a Cleopatra; but he could never get the right model. As the old man stretched himself out on it, pale and suffering, he did not look much like a Cleopatra, but Beaton was struck with his effectiveness, and the likeness between him and his daughter; she would make a very good Cleopatra in some ways. All the time, while these thoughts passed through his mind, he was afraid Dryfoos would die. The old man fetched his breath in gasps, which presently smoothed and lengthened into his normal breathing. Beaton got him a glass of wine, and after tasting it he sat up.

"You've got to excuse me," he said, getting back to his characteristic grimness with surprising suddenness, when once he began to recover himself. "I've been through a good deal lately; and sometimes it catches me round the heart like a pain."

In his life of selfish immunity from grief Beaton could not understand this experience that poignant sorrow brings; he said to himself that Dryfoos was going the way of *angina pectoris*; as he began shuffling off the tiger-skin he said, 'Had you better get up? Wouldn't you like me to call a doctor?'

"I'm all right, young man." Dryfoos took his hat and stick from him, but he made for the door so uncertainly that Beaton put his hand under his elbow and helped him out, and down the stairs, to his coupé.

“Hadn’t you better let me drive home with you?” he asked.

“What?” said Dryfoos suspiciously.

Beaton repeated his question.

“I guess I’m able to go home alone,” said Dryfoos, in a surly tone, and he put his head out of the window and called up “Home!” to the driver, who immediately started off, and left Beaton standing beside the curb-stone.

XIV.

BEATON wasted the rest of the day in the emotions and speculations which Dryfoos's call inspired. It was not that they continuously occupied him, but they broke up the train of other thoughts, and spoiled him for work; a very little spoiled Beaton for work; he required just the right mood for work. He comprehended perfectly well that Dryfoos had made him that extraordinary embassy because he wished him to renew his visits, and he easily imagined the means that had brought him to this pass. From what he knew of that girl he did not envy her father his meeting with her when he must tell her his mission had failed. But had it failed? When Beaton came to ask himself this question, he could only perceive that he and Dryfoos had failed to find any ground of sympathy, and had parted in the same dislike with which they had met. But as to any other failure, it was certainly tacit, and it still rested with him to give it effect. He could go back to Dryfoos's house, as freely as before, and it was clear that he was very much desired to come back. But if he went back it was also clear that he must go back with intentions more

explicit than before, and now he had to ask himself just how much or how little he had meant by going there. His liking for Christine had certainly not increased, but the charm, on the other hand, of holding a leopardess in leash had not yet palled upon him. In his life of inconstancies, it was a pleasure to rest upon something fixed, and the man who had no control over himself liked logically enough to feel his control of some one else. The fact cannot otherwise be put in terms, and the attraction which Christine Dryfoos had for him, apart from this, escapes from all terms, as anything purely and merely passionnal must. He had seen from the first that she was a cat, and so far as youth forecasts such things, he felt that she would be a shrew. But he had a perverse sense of her beauty, and he knew a sort of life in which her power to molest him with her temper could be reduced to the smallest proportions, and even broken to pieces. Then the consciousness of her money entered. It was evident that the old man had mentioned his millions in the way of a hint to him of what he might reasonably expect if he would turn and be his son-in-law. Beaton did not put it to himself in those words; and in fact his cogitations were not in words at all. It was the play of cognitions, of sensations, formlessly tending to the effect which can only be very clumsily interpreted in language. But when he got to this point in them, Beaton rose to magnanimity and in a flash of dramatic reverie disposed of a part of Dryfoos's riches in

placing his father and mother, and his brothers and sisters, beyond all pecuniary anxiety for ever. He had no shame, no scruple in this, for he had been a pensioner upon others ever since a Syracusan amateur of the arts had detected his talent, and given him the money to go and study abroad. Beaton had always considered the money a loan, to be repaid out of his future success; but he now never dreamt of repaying it; as the man was rich, he had even a contempt for the notion of repaying him; but this did not prevent him from feeling very keenly the hardships he put his father to in borrowing money from him, though he never repaid his father, either. In this reverie he saw himself sacrificed in marriage with Christine Dryfoos, in a kind of admiring self-pity, and he was melted by the spectacle of the dignity with which he suffered all the life-long trials ensuing from his unselfishness. The fancy that Alma Leighton came bitterly to regret him, contributed to soothe and flatter him, and he was not sure that Margaret Vance did not suffer a like loss in him.

There had been times when, as he believed, that beautiful girl's high thoughts had tended toward him; there had been looks, gestures, even words, that had this effect to him, or that seemed to have had it; and Beaton saw that he might easily construe Mrs. Horn's confidential appeal to him to get Margaret interested in art again as something by no means necessarily offensive, even though it had been made to him as to a master of illusion. If Mrs.

Horn had to choose between him and the life of good works to which her niece was visibly abandoning herself, Beaton could not doubt which she would choose ; the only question was how real the danger of a life of good works was.

As he thought of these two girls, one so charming and the other so divine, it became indefinitely difficult to renounce them for Christine Dryfoos, with her sultry temper, and her earthbound ideals. Life had been so flattering to Beaton hitherto that he could not believe them both finally indifferent ; and if they were not indifferent, perhaps he did not wish either of them to be very definite. What he really longed for was their sympathy ; for a man who is able to walk round quite ruthlessly on the feelings of others often has very tender feelings of his own, easily lacerated, and eagerly responsive to the caresses of compassion. In this frame Beaton determined to go that afternoon, though it was not Mrs. Horn's day, and call upon her in the hope of possibly seeing Miss Vance alone. As he continued in it, he took this for a sign, and actually went. It did not fall out at once as he wished, but he got Mrs. Horn to talking again about her niece, and Mrs. Horn again regretted that nothing could be done by the fine arts to reclaim Margaret from good works.

"Is she at home ? Will you let me see her ?" asked Beaton with something of the scientific interest of a physician inquiring for a patient whose symptoms have been rehearsed to him. He had not asked for her before.

"Yes, certainly," said Mrs. Horn, and she went herself to call Margaret, and she did not return with her. The girl entered with the gentle grace peculiar to her; and Beaton, bent as he was on his own consolation, could not help being struck with the spiritual exaltation of her look. At sight of her, the vague hope he had never quite relinquished, that they might be something more than æsthetic friends, died in his heart. She wore black, as she often did; but in spite of its fashion her dress received a nun-like effect from the pensive absence of her face. "Decidedly," thought Beaton, "she is far gone in good works."

But he rose, all the same, to meet her on the old level, and he began at once to talk to her of the subject he had been discussing with her aunt. He said frankly that they both felt she had unjustifiably turned her back upon possibilities which she ought not to neglect.

"You know very well," she answered, "that I couldn't do anything in that way worth the time I should waste on it. Don't talk of it, please. I suppose my aunt has been asking you to say this, but it's no use. I'm sorry it's no use, she wishes it so much; but I'm not sorry otherwise. You can find the pleasure at least of doing good work in it; but I couldn't find anything in it but a barren amusement. Mr. Wetmore is right; for me, it's like enjoying an opera, or a ball."

"That's one of Wetmore's phrases. He'd sacrifice anything to them."

She put aside the whole subject with a look. "You were not at Mr. Dryfoos's the other day. Have you seen them, any of them, lately?"

"I haven't been there for some time, no," said Beaton evasively. But he thought if he was to get on to anything, he had better be candid. "Mr. Dryfoos was at my studio this morning. He's got a queer notion. He wants me to paint his son's portrait."

She started. "And will you——"

"No, I couldn't do such a thing. It isn't in my way. I told him so. His son had a beautiful face—an antique profile; a sort of early Christian type; but I'm too much of a pagan for that sort of thing."

"Yes."

"Yes," Beaton continued, not quite liking her assent, after he had invited it. He had his pride in being a pagan, a Greek, but it failed him in her presence, now; and he wished that she had protested he was none. "He was a singular creature; a kind of survival; an exile in our time and place. I don't know: we don't quite expect a saint to be rustic; but with all his goodness Conrad Dryfoos was a country person. If he were not dying for a cause you could imagine him milking." Beaton intended a contempt that came from the bitterness of having himself once milked the family cow.

His contempt did not reach Miss Vance. "He died for a cause," she said. "The holiest."

"Of labour?"

"Of peace. He was there to persuade the strikers to be quiet and go home."

"I haven't been quite sure," said Beaton. "But in any case he had no business there. The police were on hand to do the persuading."

"I can't let you talk so!" cried the girl. "It's shocking! Oh, I know it's the way people talk, and the worst is that in the sight of the world it's the right way. But the blessing on the peace-makers is not for the policemen with their clubs."

Beaton saw that she was nervous; he made his reflection that she was altogether too far gone in good works for the fine arts to reach her; he began to think how he could turn her primitive Christianity to the account of his modern heathenism. He had no deeper design than to get flattered back into his own favour far enough to find courage for some sort of decisive step. In his heart he was trying to will whether he should or should not go back to Dryfoos's house. It could not be from the caprice that had formerly taken him; it must be from a definite purpose; again he realised this. "Of course; you are right," he said. "I wish I could have answered that old man differently. I fancy he was bound up in his son, though he quarrelled with him, and crossed him. But I couldn't do it; it wasn't possible." He said to himself that if she said, "No," now, he would be ruled by her agreement with him; and if she disagreed with him, he would be ruled still by the chance, and would go no more to the Dryfoos's. He found himself embarrassed to the point of blushing when she said nothing, and left him, as it were, on his own hands. "I should like to have given him that comfort; I

fancy he hasn't much comfort in life; but there seems no comfort in me." He dropped his head in a fit attitude for compassion; but she poured no pity upon it.

"There is no comfort for us in ourselves," she said. "It's hard to get outside; but there's only despair within. When we think we have done something for others, by some great effort, we find it's all for our own vanity."

"Yes," said Beaton. "If I could paint pictures for righteousness' sake, I should have been glad to do Conrad Dryfoos for his father. I felt sorry for him. Did the rest seem very much broken up? You saw them all?"

"Not all. Miss Dryfoos was ill, her sister said. It's hard to tell how much people suffer. His mother seemed bewildered. The younger sister is a simple creature; she looks like him; I think she must have something of his spirit."

"Not much spirit of any kind, I imagine," said Beaton. "But she's amiably material. Did they say Miss Dryfoos was seriously ill?"

"No. I supposed she might be prostrated by her brother's death."

"Does she seem that kind of person to you, Miss Vance?" asked Beaton.

"I don't know. I haven't tried to see so much of them as I might, the past winter. I was not sure about her when I met her; I've never seen much of people, except in my own set, and the—very poor. I have been afraid I didn't understand

her. She may have a kind of pride that would not let her do herself justice."

Beaton felt the unconscious dislike in the endeavour of praise. "Then she seems to you like a person whose life—its trials, its chances—would make more of than she is now?"

"I didn't say that. I can't judge of her at all; but where we don't know, don't you think we ought to imagine the best?"

"Oh yes," said Beaton. "I didn't know but what I once said of them might have prejudiced you against them. I have accused myself of it." He always took a tone of conscientiousness, of self-censure, in talking with Miss Vance; he could not help it.

"Oh no. And I never allowed myself to form any judgment of her. She is very pretty, don't you think, in a kind of way?"

"Very."

"She has a beautiful brunette colouring: that floury white and the delicate pink in it. Her eyes are beautiful."

"She's graceful, too," said Beaton. "I've tried her in colour; but I didn't make it out."

"I've wondered sometimes," said Miss Vance, "whether that elusive quality you find in some people you try to paint doesn't characterise them all through. Miss Dryfoos might be ever so much finer and better than we would find out in the society way that seems the only way."

"Perhaps," said Beaton gloomily; and he went

away profoundly discouraged by this last analysis of Christine's character. The angelic imperviousness of Miss Vance to properties of which his own wickedness was so keenly aware in Christine might have made him laugh, if it had not been such a serious affair with him. As it was, he smiled to think how very differently Alma Leighton would have judged her from Miss Vance's premises. He liked that clear vision of Alma's even when it pierced his own disguises. Yes, that was the light he had let die out, and it might have shone upon his path through life. Beaton never felt so poignantly the disadvantage of having on any given occasion been wanting to his own interests through his self-love as in this. He had no one to blame but himself for what had happened, but he blamed Alma for what might happen in the future because she shut out the way of retrieval and return. When he thought of the attitude she had taken toward him, it seemed incredible, and he was always longing to give her a final chance to reverse her final judgment. It appeared to him that the time had come for this now, if ever.

XV.

WHILE we are still young we feel a kind of pride, a sort of fierce pleasure, in any important experience, such as we have read of or heard of in the lives of others, no matter how painful. It was this pride, this pleasure, which Beaton now felt in realising that the toils of fate were about him, that between him and a future of which Christine Dryfoos must be the genius, there was nothing but the will, the mood, the fancy of a girl who had not given him the hope that either could ever again be in his favour. He had nothing to trust to, in fact, but his knowledge that he had once had them all; she did not deny that; but neither did she conceal that he had flung away his power over them, and she had told him that they never could be his again. A man knows that he can love and wholly cease to love, not once merely, but several times; he recognises the fact in regard to himself, both theoretically and practically; but in regard to women he cherishes the superstition of the romances that love is once for all, and for ever. It was because Beaton would not believe that Alma Leighton, being a woman, could put him out of her heart after suffering him

to steal into it, that he now hoped anything from her, and she had been so explicit when they last spoke of that affair that he did not hope much. He said to himself that he was going to cast himself on her mercy, to take whatever chance of life, love, and work there was in her having the smallest pity on him. If she would have none, then there was but one thing he could do: marry Christine and go abroad. He did not see how he could bring this alternative to bear upon Alma; even if she knew what he would do in case of a final rejection, he had grounds for fearing she would not care; but he brought it to bear upon himself, and it nerved him to a desperate courage. He could hardly wait for evening to come, before he went to see her; when it came, it seemed to have come too soon. He had wrought himself thoroughly into the conviction that he was in earnest, and that everything depended upon her answer to him, but it was not till he found himself in her presence, and alone with her, that he realised the truth of his conviction. Then the influences of her grace, her gaiety, her arch beauty, above all, her good sense, penetrated his soul like a subtle intoxication, and he said to himself that he was right; he could not live without her; these attributes of hers were what he needed to win him, to cheer him, to charm him, to guide him. He longed so to please her, to ingratiate himself with her, that he attempted to be light like her in his talk, but lapsed into abysmal absences, and gloomy recesses of introspection.

"What are you laughing at?" he asked, suddenly starting from one of these.

"What you are thinking of."

"It's nothing to laugh at. Do you know what it is I'm thinking of?"

"Don't tell, if it's dreadful."

"Oh, I dare say you wouldn't think it's dreadful," he said, with bitterness. "It's simply the case of a man who has made a fool of himself, and sees no help of retrieval in himself."

"Can any one else help a man unmake a fool of himself?" she asked, with a smile.

"Yes. In a case like this."

"Dear me! This is very interesting."

She did not ask him what the case was, but he was launched now, and he pressed on. "I am the man who has made a fool of himself——"

"Oh!"

"And you can help me out if you will. Alma, I wish you could see me as I really am."

"Do you, Mr. Beaton? Perhaps I do."

"No; you don't. You formulated me in a certain way, and you won't allow for the change that takes place in every one. *You* have changed; why shouldn't I?"

"Has this to do with your having made a fool of yourself?"

"Yes."

"Oh! Then I don't see how you have changed."

She laughed, and he too, ruefully. "You're cruel. Not but what I deserve your mockery. But the

change was not from the capacity of making a fool of myself. I suppose I shall always do that more or less—unless you help me. Alma! Why can't you have a little compassion? You know that I must always love you."

"Nothing makes me doubt that like your saying it, Mr. Beaton. But now you've broken your word——"

"You are to blame for that. You knew I couldn't keep it!"

"Yes, I'm to blame. I was wrong to let you come—after that. And so I forgive you for speaking to me in that way again. But it's perfectly impossible and perfectly useless for *me* to hear you any more on that subject; and so—good-bye!"

She rose, and he perforce with her. "And do you mean it?" he asked. "For ever?"

"For ever. This is truly the last time I will ever see you if I can help it. Oh, I feel sorry enough for you!" she said, with a glance at his face. "I do believe you are in earnest. But it's too late now. Don't let us talk about it any more! But we shall, if we meet, and so——"

"And so good-bye! Well I've nothing more to say, and I might as well say that. I think you've been very good to me. It seems to me as if you had been—shall I say it?—trying to give me a chance. Is that so?"

She dropped her eyes and did not answer.

"You found it was no use! Well, I thank you for trying. It's curious to think that I once had your trust, your regard, and now I haven't it. You

don't mind my remembering that I had? It'll be some little consolation, and I believe it will be some help. I know I can't retrieve the past now. It *is* too late. It seems too preposterous—perfectly lurid—that I could have been going to tell you what a tangle I'd got myself in, and to ask you to help untangle me. I must choke in the infernal coil, but I'd like to have the sweetness of your pity in it—whatever it is.”

She put out her hand. “Whatever it is, I do pity you; I said that.”

“Thank you.” He kissed the hand she gave him and went.

He had gone on some such terms before; was it now for the last time? She believed it was. She felt in herself a satiety, a fatigue, in which his good looks, his invented airs and poses, his real trouble, were all alike repulsive. She did not acquit herself of the wrong of having let him think she might yet have liked him as she once did; but she had been honestly willing to see whether she could. It had mystified her to find that when they first met in New York, after their summer in St. Barnaby, she cared nothing for him; she had expected to punish him for his neglect, and then fancy him as before, but she did not. More and more she saw him selfish and mean, weak-willed, narrow-minded and hard-hearted; and aimless, with all his talent. She admired his talent in proportion as she learned more of artists, and perceived how uncommon it was; but she said to herself that if she were going to devote

herself to art, she would do it at first hand. She was perfectly serene and happy in her final rejection of Beaton ; he had worn out not only her fancy, but her sympathy too.

This was what her mother would not believe when Alma reported the interview to her ; she would not believe it was the last time they should meet ; death itself can hardly convince us that it is the last time of anything, of everything between ourselves and the dead. "Well, Alma," she said, "I hope you'll never regret what you've done."

"You may be sure I shall not regret it. If ever I'm low-spirited about anything, I'll think of giving Mr. Beaton his freedom, and that will cheer me up."

"And don't you expect to get married ? Do you intend to be an old maid ?" demanded her mother, in the bonds of the superstition women have so long been under to the effect that every woman must wish to get married, if for no other purpose than to avoid being an old maid.

"Well, mamma," said Alma, "I intend being a young one for a few years yet ; and then I'll see. If I meet the right person, all well and good ; if not, not. But I shall pick and chose, as a man does ; I won't merely be picked and chosen."

"You can't help yourself ; you may be very glad if you *are* picked and chosen."

"What nonsense, mamma ! A girl can get any man she wants, if she goes about it the right way. And when *my* 'fated fairy prince' comes along, I shall just simply make furious love to him, and grab

him. Of course, I shall make a decent pretence of talking in my sleep. I believe it's done that way, more than half the time. The fated fairy prince wouldn't *see* the princess in nine cases out of ten if she didn't say something; he would go mooning along after the maids of honour."

Mrs. Leighton tried to look unspeakable horror; but she broke down and laughed. "Well, you are a strange girl, Alma."

"I don't know about that. But one thing I *do* know, mamma, and that is that Prince Beaton isn't the F. F. P. for *me*. How strange *you* are, mamma! Don't you think it would be perfectly *disgusting* to accept a person you didn't care for, and let him go on and love you and marry you? It's sickening."

"Why, certainly, Alma. It's only because I know you *did* care for him once——"

"And now I don't. And he *didn't* care for me once, and now he does. And so we're quits."

"If I could believe——"

"You had better brace up and try, mamma; for as Mr. Fulkerson says, it's as sure as guns. From the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, he's loathsome to me; and he keeps getting loathsomer. Ugh! Good night!"

XVI.

"WELL, I guess she's given him the grand bounce, at last," said Fulkerson to March in one of their moments of confidence at the office. "That's Mad's inference from appearances—and disappearances; and some little hints from Ma Leighton."

"Well, I don't know that I have any criticisms to offer," said March. "It may be bad for Beaton, but it's a very good thing for Miss Leighton. Upon the whole, I believe I congratulate her."

"Well, I don't know. I always kind of hoped it would turn out the other way. You know I always had a sneaking fondness for the fellow."

"Miss Leighton seems not to have had."

"It's a pity she hadn't. I tell you, March, it ain't so easy for a girl to get married, here in the East, that she can afford to despise any chance."

"Isn't that rather a low view of it?"

"It's a common-sense view. Beaton has the making of a first-rate fellow in him. He's the raw material of a great artist and a good citizen. All he wants is somebody to take him in hand and keep him from makin' an ass of himself and kickin' over

the traces generally, and ridin' two or three horses bareback at once."

"It seems a simple problem, though the metaphor is rather complicated," said March. "But talk to Miss Leighton about it. I haven't given Beaton the grand bounce."

He began to turn over the manuscripts on his table, and Fulkerson went away. But March found himself thinking of the matter from time to time during the day, and he spoke to his wife about it when he went home. She surprised him by taking Fulkerson's view of it.

"Yes, it's a pity she couldn't have made up her mind to have him. It's better for a woman to be married."

"I thought Paul only went so far as to say it was well. But what would become of Miss Leighton's artistic career if she married?"

"Oh, her artistic career!" said Mrs. March, with matronly contempt of it.

"But look here!" cried her husband. "Suppose she doesn't like him?"

"How can a girl of that age tell whether she likes any one or not?"

"It seems to me *you* were able to tell at that age, Isabel. But let's examine this thing. (This thing! I believe Fulkerson is characterising my whole parlance, as well as your morals.) Why shouldn't we rejoice as much at a non-marriage as a marriage? When we consider the enormous risks people take in linking their lives together, after not half so

much thought as goes to an ordinary horse trade, I think we ought to be glad whenever they don't do it. I believe that this popular demand for the matrimony of others comes from our novel-reading. We get to thinking that there is no other happiness or good fortune in life except marriage; and it's offered in fiction as the highest premium for virtue, courage, beauty, learning, and saving human life. We all know it isn't. We know that in reality marriage is dog cheap, and anybody can have it for the asking—if he keeps asking enough people. By-and-by some fellow will wake up and see that a first-class story can be written from the anti-marriage point of view; and he'll begin with an engaged couple, and devote his novel to *disengaging* them, and rendering them separately happy ever after in the *dénoûment*. It will make his everlasting fortune."

"Why don't *you* write it, Basil?" she asked. "It's a delightful idea. You could do it splendidly."

He became fascinated with the notion. He developed it in detail; but at the end he sighed and said, "With this *Every Other Week* work on my hands, of course I can't attempt a novel. But perhaps I sha'n't have it long."

She was instantly anxious to know what he meant, and the novel and Miss Leighton's affair were both dropped out of their thoughts. "What do you mean? Has Mr. Fulkerson said anything yet?"

"Not a word. He knows no more about it than

I do. Dryfoos hasn't spoken, and we're both afraid to ask him. Of course, I *couldn't* ask him."

"No."

"But it's pretty uncomfortable, to be kept hanging by the gills, so, as Fulkerson says."

"Yes, we don't know what to do."

March and Fulkerson said the same to each other; and Fulkerson said that if the old man pulled out, he did not know what would happen. He had no capital to carry the thing on, and the very fact that the old man had pulled out would damage it so that it would be hard to get anybody else to put it. In the meantime Fulkerson was running Conrad's office-work, when he ought to be looking after the outside interests of the thing; and he could not see the day when he could get married.

"I don't know which it's worse for, March: you or me. I don't know, under the circumstances, whether it's worse to have a family or to want to have one. Of course—of course! We can't hurry the old man up. It wouldn't be decent, and it would be dangerous. We got to wait."

He almost decided to draw upon Dryfoos for some money; he did not need any, but he said may be the demand would act as a hint upon him. One day, about a week after Alma's final rejection of Beaton, Dryfoos came into March's office. Fulkerson was out, but the old man seemed not to have tried to see him.

He put his hat on the floor by his chair, after he sat down, and looked at March a while with his old eyes, which had the vitreous glitter of old eyes

stimulated to sleeplessness. Then he said abruptly, "Mr. March, how would you like to take this thing off my hands?"

"I don't understand, exactly," March began; but of course he understood that Dryfoos was offering to let him have *Every Other Week*, on some terms or other, and his heart leaped with hope.

The old man knew he understood, and so he did not explain. He said, "I am going to Europe, to take my family there. The doctor thinks it might do my wife some good; and I ain't very well myself, and my girls both want to go; and so we're goin'. If you want to take this thing off my hands, I reckon I can let you have it in 'most any shape you say. You're all settled here in New York, and I don't suppose you want to break up, much, at your time of life, and I've been thinkin' whether you wouldn't like to take the thing."

The word, which Dryfoos had now used three times, made March at last think of Fulkerson; he had been filled too full of himself to think of any one else till he had mastered the notion of such wonderful good fortune as seemed about falling to him. But now, he did think of Fulkerson, and with some shame and confusion; for he remembered how when Dryfoos had last approached him there on the business of his connection with *Every Other Week*, he had been very haughty with him, and told him that he did not know him in this connection. He blushed to find how far his thoughts had now run without encountering this obstacle of etiquette.

"Have you spoken to Mr. Fulkerson?" he asked.

"No, I hain't. It ain't a question of management. It's a question of buying and selling. I offer the thing to you first. I reckon Fulkerson couldn't get on very well without you."

March saw the real difference in the two cases, and he was glad to see it, because he could act more decisively if not hampered by an obligation to consistency. "I am gratified, of course, Mr. Dryfoos; extremely gratified; and it's no use pretending that I shouldn't be happy beyond bounds to get possession of *Every Other Week*. But I don't feel quite free to talk about it apart from Mr. Fulkerson."

"Oh, all right!" said the old man, with quick offence.

March hastened to say, "I feel bound to Mr. Fulkerson in every way. He got me to come here, and I couldn't even *seem* to act without him."

He put it questioningly, and the old man answered, "Yes, I can see that. When'll he be in? I can wait." But he looked impatient.

"Very soon, now," said March, looking at his watch. "He was only to be gone a moment," and while he went on to talk with Dryfoos, he wondered why the old man should have come first to speak with him, and whether it was from some obscure wish to make him reparation for displeasures in the past, or from a distrust or dislike of Fulkerson. Whichever light he looked at it in, it was flattering.

"Do you think of going abroad soon?" he asked.

"What? Yes—I don't know—I reckon. We

got our passage engaged. It's on one of them French boats. We're goin' to Paris."

"Oh! That will be interesting to the young ladies."

"Yes. I reckon we're goin' for them. 'Tain't likely my wife and me would want to pull up stakes at our age," said the old man sorrowfully.

"But you may find it do you good, Mr. Dryfoos," said March, with a kindness that was real, mixed as it was with the selfish interest he now had in the intended voyage.

"Well, may be, may be," sighed the old man; and he dropped his head forward. "It don't make a great deal of difference what we do or we don't do, for the few years left."

"I hope Mrs. Dryfoos is as well as usual," said March, finding the ground delicate and difficult.

"Middlin', middlin'," said the old man. "My daughter Christine, she ain't very well."

"Oh," said March. It was quite impossible for him to affect a more explicit interest in the fact. He and Dryfoos sat silent for a few moments, and he was vainly casting about in his thought for something else which would tide them over the interval till Fulkerson came, when he heard his step on the stairs.

"Hello, hello!" he said. "Meeting of the clans!" It was always a meeting of the clans, with Fulkerson, or a field day, or an extra session, or a regular conclave, whenever he saw people of any common interest together. "Hain't seen you here for a good

while, Mr. Dryfoos. *Did* think some of running away with *Every Other Week* one while, but couldn't seem to work March up to the point."

He gave Dryfoos his hand, and pushed aside the papers on the corner of March's desk, and sat down there, and went on briskly with the nonsense he could always talk, while he was waiting for another to develop any matter of business; he told March afterward that he scented business in the air as soon as he came into the room where he and Dryfoos were sitting.

Dryfoos seemed determined to leave the word to March, who said, after an inquiring look at him, "Mr. Dryfoos has been proposing to let us have *Every Other Week*, Fulkerson."

"Well, that's good; that suits yours truly; March & Fulkerson, publishers and proprietors, won't pretend it don't, *if* the terms are all right."

"The terms," said the old man, "are whatever you want 'em. I haven't got any more use for the concern——" He gulped, and stopped; they knew what he was thinking of, and they looked down in pity. He went on. "I woon't put any more money in it; but what I've put in a'ready, can stay; and you can pay me four per cent."

He got upon his feet; and March and Fulkerson stood, too.

"Well, I call that pretty white," said Fulkerson. "It's a bargain as far as I'm concerned. I suppose you'll want to talk it over with your wife, March?"

"Yes; I shall," said March. "I can see that it's

a great chance ; but I want to talk it over with my wife."

"Well, that's right," said the old man. "Let me hear from you to-morrow."

He went out, and Fulkerson began to dance round the room. He caught March about his stalwart girth and tried to make him waltz ; the office-boy came to the door, and looked on with approval.

"Come, come, you idiot!" said March, rooting himself to the carpet.

"It's just throwing the thing into our mouths," said Fulkerson. "The wedding will be this day week. No cards ! Teedle-lumpty diddle ! Teedle-lumpty-dee ! What do you suppose he *means* by it, March ?" he asked, bringing himself soberly up, of a sudden. "What is his little game ? Or is he crazy ? It don't seem like the Dryfoos of *my* previous acquaintance."

"I suppose," March suggested, "that he's got money enough, so that he don't care for this——"

"Pshaw ! You're a poet ! Don't you know that the more money that kind of man has got, the more he cares for money ? It's some fancy of his—like having Lindau's funeral at his house—— By jings, March, I believe *you're* his fancy !"

"Oh, now ! Don't *you* be a poet, Fulkerson !"

"I do ! He seemed to take a kind of shine to you from the day you wouldn't turn off old Lindau ; he did indeed. It kind of shook him up. It made him think you had something *in* you. He was deceived by appearances. Look here ! I'm going round to

see Mrs. March with you, and explain the thing to her. I *know* Mrs. March! She wouldn't believe you knew what you were going in for. She has a great respect for your mind, but she don't think you've got any sense. Heigh?"

"All right," said March, glad of the notion; and it was really a comfort to have Fulkerson with him to develop all the points; and it was delightful to see how clearly and quickly she seized them; it made March proud of her. She was only angry that they had lost any time in coming to submit so plain a case to her. Mr. Dryfoos might change his mind in the night, and then everything would be lost. They must go to him instantly, and tell him that they accepted; they must telegraph him.

"Might as well send a district messenger; he'd get there next week," said Fulkerson. "No, no! It'll all keep till to-morrow, and be the better for it. If he's got this fancy for March, as I say, he ain't agoing to change it in a single night. People don't change their fancies for March in a lifetime. Heigh?"

When Fulkerson turned up very early at the office next morning, as March did, he was less strenuous about Dryfoos's fancy for March. It was as if Miss Woodburn might have blown cold upon that theory, as something unjust to his own merit, for which she would naturally be more jealous than he.

March told him, what he had forgotten to tell him the day before, though he had been trying, all

through their excited talk, to get it in, that the Dryfooses were going abroad.

"Oh, ho!" cried Fulkerson. "*That's* the milk in the cocoanut, is it? Well, I *thought* there must be something."

But this fact had not changed Mrs. March at all in her conviction that it was Mr. Dryfoos's fancy for her husband which had moved him to make him this extraordinary offer, and she reminded him that it had first been made to him, without regard to Fulkerson. "And perhaps," she went on, "Mr. Dryfoos has been changed—softened; and doesn't find money all in all any more. He's had enough to change him, poor old man!"

"Does anything from without change us?" her husband mused aloud. "We're brought up to think so by the novelists, who really have the charge of people's thinking, nowadays. But I doubt it, especially if the thing outside is some great event, something cataclysmal, like this tremendous sorrow of Dryfoos's."

"Then what *is* it that changes us?" demanded his wife, almost angry with him for his heresy.

"Well, it won't do to say, the Holy Spirit indwelling. That would sound like cant at this day. But the old fellows that used to say that had some glimpses of the truth. They knew that it is the still, small voice that the soul heeds, not the deafening blasts of doom. I suppose I should have to say that we didn't change at all. We develop. There's the making of several characters in each of

us ; we *are* each several characters, and sometimes this character has the lead in us, and sometimes that. From what Fulkerson has told me of Dryfoos I should say he had always had the potentiality of better things in him than he has ever been yet ; and perhaps the time has come for the good to have its chance. The growth in one direction has stopped ; it's begun in another ; that's all. The man hasn't been changed by his son's death ; it stunned, it benumbed him ; but it couldn't change him. It was an event, like any other, and it had to happen as much as his being born. It was forecast from the beginning of time, and was as entirely an effect of his coming into the world——”

“Basil ! Basil !” cried his wife. “This is fatalism !”

“Then you think,” he said, “that a sparrow falls to the ground *without* the will of God ?” and he laughed provokingly. But he went on more soberly. “I don't know what it all means, Isabel, though I believe it means good. What did Christ himself say ? That if one rose from the dead it would not avail. And yet we are always looking for the miraculous ! I believe that unhappy old man truly grieves for his son, whom he treated cruelly without the final intention of cruelty, for he loved him and wished to be proud of him ; but I don't think his death has changed him, any more than the smallest event in the chain of events remotely working through his nature from the beginning. But why do you think he's changed at all ? Because he offers to sell me

Every Other Week on easy terms? He says himself that he has no further use for the thing; and he knows perfectly well that he couldn't get his money out of it now, without an enormous shrinkage. He couldn't appear at this late day as the owner, and sell it to anybody but Fulkerson and me for a fifth of what it's cost him. He *can* sell it to us for *all* it's cost him; and four per cent. is no bad interest on his money till we can pay it back. It's a good thing for us; but we have to ask whether Dryfoos has done us the good, or whether it's the blessing of Heaven. If it's merely the blessing of Heaven, I don't propose being grateful for it."

March laughed again, and his wife said, "It's disgusting."

"It's business," he assented. "Business is business; but I don't say it isn't disgusting. Lindau had a low opinion of it."

"I think that with all his faults Mr. Dryfoos is a better man than Lindau," she proclaimed.

"Well, he's certainly able to offer us a better thing in *Every Other Week*," said March.

She knew he was enamoured of the literary finish of his cynicism, and that at heart he was as humbly and truly grateful as she was for the good fortune opening to them.

XVII.

BEATON was at his best when he parted for the last time with Alma Leighton, for he saw then that what had happened to him was the necessary consequence of what he had been, if not what he had done. Afterward he lost this clear vision; he began to deny the fact; he drew upon his knowledge of life, and in arguing himself into a different frame of mind he alleged the case of different people who had done and been much worse things than he, and yet no such disagreeable consequence had befallen them. Then he saw that it was all the work of blind chance, and he said to himself that it was this that made him desperate, and willing to call evil his good, and to take his own wherever he could find it. There was a great deal that was literary and factitious and tawdry in the mood in which he went to see Christine Dryfoos, the night when the Marches sat talking their prospects over; and nothing that was decided in his purpose. He knew what the drift of his mind was, but he had always preferred to let chance determine his events, and now since chance had played him such an ill turn with Alma, he left it the whole responsibility. Not in terms, but in effect, this was

his thought as he walked on uptown to pay the first of the visits which Dryfoos had practically invited him to resume. He had an insolent satisfaction in having delayed it so long; if he was going back he was going back on his own conditions, and these were to be as hard and humiliating as he could make them. But this intention again was inchoate, floating, the stuff of an intention, rather than intention; an expression of temperament chiefly.

He had been expected before that. Christine had got out of Mela that her father had been at Beaton's studio, and then she had gone at the old man and got from him every smallest fact of the interview there. She had flung back in his teeth the good-will toward herself with which he had gone to Beaton. She was furious with shame and resentment; she told him he had made bad worse, that he had made a fool of himself to no end; she spared neither his age, nor his grief-broken spirit, in which his will could not rise against hers. She filled the house with her rage, screaming it out upon him; but when her fury was once spent, she began to have some hopes from what her father had done. She no longer kept her bed; every evening she dressed herself in the dress Beaton admired the most, and sat up till a certain hour to receive him. She had fixed a day in her own mind before which, if he came, she would forgive him all he had made her suffer: the mortification, the suspense, the despair. Beyond this, she had the purpose of making her father go to Europe; she felt that she could no

longer live in America, with the double disgrace that had been put upon her.

Beaton rang, and while the servant was coming the insolent caprice seized him to ask for the young ladies instead of the old man, as he had supposed of course he should do. The maid who answered the bell, in the place of the reluctant Irishman of other days, had all his hesitation in admitting that the young ladies were at home.

He found Mela in the drawing-room. At sight of him she looked scared ; but she seemed to be reassured by his calm. He asked if he was not to have the pleasure of seeing Miss Dryfoos too ; and Mela said she reckoned the girl had gone upstairs to tell her. Mela was in black, and Beaton noted how well the solid sable became her rich, red blond beauty ; he wondered what the effect would be with Christine.

But she, when she appeared, was not in mourning. He fancied that she wore the lustrous black silk, with the breadths of white Venetian lace about the neck which he had praised, because he praised it. Her cheeks burned with a Jacqueminot crimson, what should be white in her face was chalky white. She carried a plumed ostrich fan, black and soft, and after giving him her hand, sat down and waved it to and fro slowly, as he remembered her doing the night they first met. She had no ideas, except such as related intimately to herself, and she had no gabble, like Mela ; and she let him talk. It was past the day when she had promised herself she would forgive him ; but as he talked on she felt all

her passion for him revived, and the conflict of desires, the desire to hate, the desire to love, made a dizzying whirl in her brain. She looked at him, half doubting whether he was really there or not. He had never looked so handsome, with his dreamy eyes floating under his heavy overhanging hair, and his pointed brown beard defined against his lustrous shirt-front. His mellowly modulated, mysterious voice lulled her; when Mela made an errand out of the room, and Beaton crossed to her and sat down by her she shivered.

"Are you cold?" he asked, and she felt the cruel mockery and exultant consciousness of power in his tone, as perhaps a wild thing feels captivity in the voice of its keeper. But now, she said she would still forgive him if he asked her.

Mela came back, and the talk fell again to the former level; but Beaton had not said anything that really meant what she wished, and she saw that he intended to say nothing. Her heart began to burn like a fire in her breast.

"You been tellun' him about our gown' to Europe?" Mela asked.

"No," said Christine briefly, and looking at the fan spread out on her lap.

Beaton asked when; and then he rose, and said if it was so soon, he supposed he should not see them again, unless he saw them in Paris; he might very likely run over, during the summer. He said to himself that he had given it a fair trial with Christine, and he could not make it go.

Christine rose, with a kind of gasp, and mechanically followed him to the door of the drawing-room; Mela came too; and while he was putting on his overcoat, she gurgled and bubbled in good-humour with all the world. Christine stood looking at him, and thinking how handsomer still he was in his overcoat; and that fire burned fiercer in her. She felt him more than life to her and knew him lost, and the frenzy that makes a woman kill the man she loves, or fling vitriol to destroy the beauty she cannot have for all hers, possessed her lawless soul. He gave his hand to Mela, and said, in his wind-harp stop, "Good-bye."

As he put out his hand to Christine, she pushed it aside with a scream of rage; she flashed at him, and with both hands made a feline pass at the face he bent toward her. He sprang back, and after an instant of stupefaction he pulled open the door behind him, and ran out into the street.

"Well, Christine Dryfoos!" said Mela. "Spag at him like a wild-cat!"

"I don't care," Christine shrieked. "I'll tear his eyes out!" She flew upstairs to her own room, and left the burden of the explanation to Mela, who did it justice.

Beaton found himself, he did not know how, in his studio, reeking with perspiration and breathless. He must almost have run. He struck a match with a shaking hand, and looked at his face in the glass. He expected to see the bleeding marks of her nails on his cheeks, but he could see nothing. He

grovelled inwardly ; it was all so low and coarse and vulgar ; it was all so just and apt to his deserts.

There was a pistol among the dusty bric-à-brac on the mantel which he had kept loaded to fire at a cat in the area. He took it and sat looking into the muzzle, wishing it might go off by accident and kill him. It slipped through his hand and struck the floor, and there was a report ; he sprang into the air, feeling that he had been shot. But he found himself still alive, with only a burning line along his cheek, such as one of Christine's finger-nails might have left.

He laughed with cynical recognition of the fact that he had got his punishment in the right way, and that his case was not to be dignified into tragedy.

XVIII.

THE Marches, with Fulkerson, went to see the Dryfooses off on the French steamer. There was no longer any business obligation on them to be civil, and there was greater kindness for that reason in the attention they offered. *Every Other Week* had been made over to the joint ownership of March and Fulkerson, and the details arranged with a hardness on Dryfoos's side which certainly left Mrs. March with a sense of his incomplete regeneration. Yet when she saw him there on the steamer, she pitied him; he looked wearied and bewildered; even his wife, with her twitching head, and her prophecies of evil, croaked hoarsely out, while she clung to Mrs. March's hand where they sat together till the leave-takers were ordered ashore, was less pathetic. Mela was looking after both of them, and trying to cheer them, in a joyful excitement. "I tell 'em it's goun' to add ten years to both their lives," she said. "The voyage'll do their healths good; and then, we're gittun' away from that miser'ble pack o' servants that was eatun' us up, there in New York. I *hate* the place!" she said, as if they had already left it. "Yes, Mrs. Mandel's

goun', too," she added, following the direction of Mrs. March's eyes where they noted Mrs. Mandel speaking to Christine on the other side of the cabin. "Her and Christine had a kind of a spat, and she was goun' to leave, but here only the other day, Christine offered to make it up with her, and now they're as thick as thieves. Well, I reckon we couldn't very well 'a' got along without her. She's about the only one that speaks French in *this* family."

Mrs. March's eyes still dwelt upon Christine's face; it was full of a furtive wildness. She seemed to be keeping a watch to prevent herself from looking as if she were looking for some one. "Do you know," Mrs. March said to her husband as they jingled along homeward in the Christopher Street bob-tail car, "I thought she was in love with that detestable Mr. Beaton of yours at one time; and that he was amusing himself with her."

"I can bear a good deal, Isabel," said March, "but I *wish* you wouldn't attribute Beaton to me. He's the invention of that Mr. Fulkerson of yours."

"Well, at any rate, I hope, now, you'll both get rid of him, in the reforms you're going to carry out."

These reforms were for a greater economy in the management of *Every Other Week*; but in their very nature they could not include the suppression of Beaton. He had always shown himself capable and loyal to the interests of the magazine, and both the new owners were glad to keep him. He was glad to stay, though he made a gruff pretence of indifference, when they came to look over the new

arrangement with him. In his heart he knew that he was a fraud; but at least he could say to himself with truth that he had not now the shame of taking Dryfoos's money.

March and Fulkerson retrenched at several points where it had seemed indispensable to spend, as long as they were not spending their own: that was only human. Fulkerson absorbed Conrad's department into his, and March found that he could dispense with Kendricks in the place of assistant which he had lately filled since Fulkerson had decided that March was overworked. They reduced the number of illustrated articles, and they systematised the payment of contributors strictly according to the sales of each number, on their original plan of co-operation: they had got to paying rather lavishly for material without reference to the sales.

Fulkerson took a little time to get married, and went on his wedding journey out to Niagara, and down the St. Lawrence to Quebec over the line of travel that the Marches had taken in their wedding journey. He had the pleasure of going from Montreal to Quebec on the same boat on which he first met March.

They have continued very good friends, and their wives are almost without the rivalry that usually embitters the wives of partners. At first Mrs. March did not like Mrs. Fulkerson's speaking of her husband as the Ownah, and March as the Editore; but it appeared that this was only a convenient method of recognising the predominant

quality in each, and was meant neither to affirm nor to deny anything. Colonel Woodburn offered as his contribution to the celebration of the co-partnership, which Fulkerson could not be prevented from dedicating with a little dinner, the story of Fulkerson's magnanimous behaviour in regard to Dryfoos at that crucial moment when it was a question whether he should give up Dryfoos or give up March. Fulkerson winced at it; but Mrs. March told her husband that now, whatever happened, she should never have any misgivings of Fulkerson again; and she asked him if he did not think he ought to apologise to him for the doubts with which he had once inspired her. March said that he did not think so.

The Fulkersons spent the summer at a seaside hotel in easy reach of the city; but they returned early to Mrs. Leighton's, with whom they are to board till spring, when they are going to fit up Fulkerson's bachelor apartment for housekeeping. Mrs. March, with her Boston scruple, thinks it will be odd, living over the *Every Other Week* offices; but there will be a separate street entrance to the apartment; and besides, in New York you may do anything.

The future of the Leightons promises no immediate change. Kendricks goes there a good deal to see the Fulkersons, and Mrs. Fulkerson says he comes to see Alma. He has seemed taken with her ever since he first met her at Dryfoos's, the day of Lindau's funeral, and though Fulkerson objects to

dating a fancy of that kind from an occasion of that kind, he justly argues with March that there can be no harm in it, and that we are liable to be struck by lightning any time. In the meanwhile there is no proof that Alma returns Kendricks' interest, if he feels any. She has got a little bit of colour into the fall exhibition; but the fall exhibition is never so good as the spring exhibition. Wetmore is rather sorry she has succeeded in this, though he promoted her success. He says her real hope is in black and white, and it is a pity for her to lose sight of her original aim of drawing for illustration.

News has come from Paris of the engagement of Christine Dryfoos. There the Dryfooses met with the success denied them in New York; many American plutocrats must await their apotheosis in Europe, where society has them, as it were, in a translation. Shortly after their arrival they were celebrated in the newspapers as the first millionaire American family of natural-gas extraction who had arrived in the capital of civilisation; and at a French watering-place Christine encountered her fate—a nobleman full of present debts and of duels in the past. Fulkerson says the old man can manage the debtor, and Christine can look out for the duellist. "They say those fellows generally whip their wives. He'd better not try it with Christine, I reckon, unless he's practised with a panther."

One day, shortly after their return to town in the autumn from the brief summer outing they permitted themselves, the Marches met Margaret Vance. At

first they did not know her in the dress of the sisterhood which she wore; but she smiled joyfully, almost gaily, on seeing them, and though she hurried by with the sister who accompanied her, and did not stay to speak, they felt that the peace that passeth understanding had looked at them from her eyes.

"Well, she is at rest, there can't be any doubt of that," he said, as he glanced round at the drifting black robe which followed her free, nun-like walk.

"Yes, now she can do all the good she likes," sighed his wife. "I wonder—I wonder if she ever told his father about her talk with poor Conrad that day he was shot?"

"I don't know. I don't care. In any event it would be right. She did nothing wrong. If she unwittingly sent him to his death, she sent him to die for God's sake, for man's sake."

"Yes—yes. But still——"

"Well, we must trust that look of hers."

THE END.

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